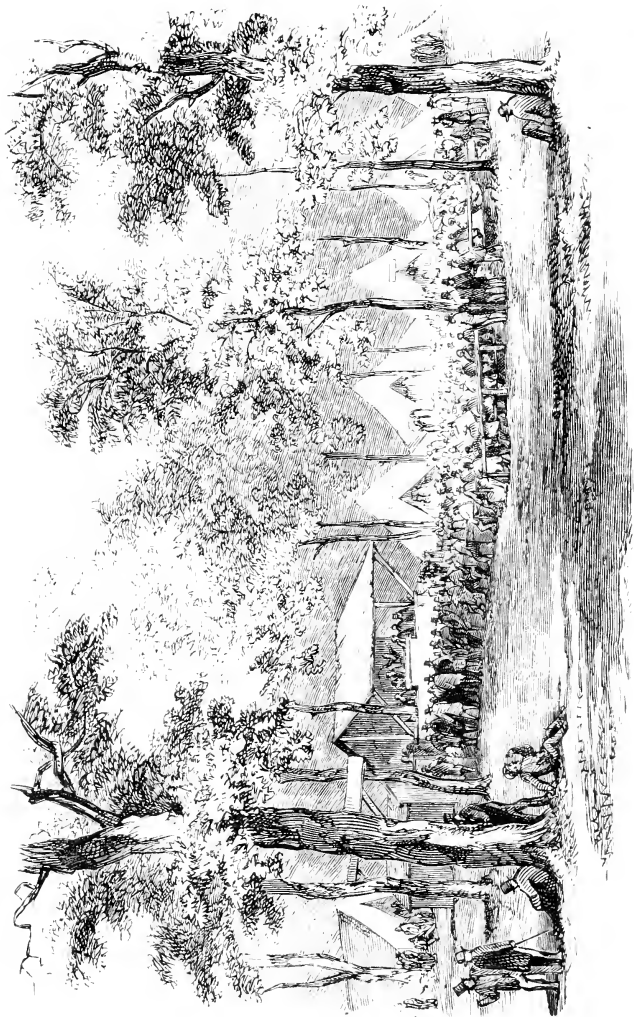


LIBRARY







A
HISTORY
OF THE
WESLEYAN GROVE, MARTHA'S VINEYARD,
CAMP MEETING,

FROM THE FIRST MEETING HELD THERE IN 1835, TO THAT
OF 1858, INCLUSIVE ; INTERSPERSED WITH TOUCH-
ING INCIDENTS AND GENERAL REMARKS.

BY REV. H. VINCENT.

"How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel." —
Num. xxiv. 5.

"The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and
delivereth them." — Ps. xxxiv. 7.

BOSTON:
PRESS OF GEO. C. RAND & AVERY,
No. 3 CORNHILL.
1858.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1858,
BY A. B. WHEELER,
In the Clerk's office of the District Court of the District of
Massachusetts.

NB 18798

F72
M5
V5

CONTENTS.

PAGE.

Preface,	5
Introduction, including Location,	9
The First Camp Meeting, in 1835,	17
The Second Camp Meeting, in 1836,	24
The Camp Meeting of 1837,	29
The Camp Meeting of 1838,	33
The Camp Meeting of 1839,	40
The Camp Meeting of 1840,	48
The Camp Meeting of 1841,	55
The Camp Meeting of 1842,	62
The Camp Meeting of 1843,	68
The Camp Meeting of 1844,	73
The Meeting at Westport Point, in 1845,	86
The Meeting in Wesleyan Grove again, in 1846,	95
The Camp Meeting of 1847,	102
The Camp Meeting of 1848,	107
The Camp Meeting of 1849,	114
The Camp Meeting of 1850,	120
The Camp Meeting of 1851,	127
The Camp Meeting of 1852,	133
The Camp Meeting of 1853,	139
The Camp Meeting of 1854,	145
The Camp Meeting of 1855,	153
The Camp Meeting of 1856,	161
The Camp Meeting of 1857,	168
The Camp Meeting of 1858,	178
Concluding Chapter,	193
Appendix — Camp Meeting Rules,	202

S.M.T.L.

LIBRARY

P R E F A C E .

Why write the history of any particular camp meeting? In reply to this question, I would say, that I desire to do good, and believe I may be likely to accomplish this object, to some extent, by giving to the public, in a somewhat permanent form, some of the most material facts and reminiscences connected with a place hallowed by a thousand Christian associations ; by the preaching of so many gospel sermons ; by the offering up of so many earnest prayers of faith ; by the uttering of so many pathetic appeals to the unconverted, and so many exhilarating songs of praise to God ; by so many sinners saved, and so many believers quickened.

If the salvation of the human soul is of such vast importance as it is believed to be by all Christendom, why should not the place and circumstances of its conversion to God be regarded as of sufficient consequence to be made matters of enduring record ?

They are of interest not only to the subjects of the work of grace themselves, but also to those who have been made the happy and honored instruments or agents in rescuing such from the road to ruin. They are especially so to the former, however. How can it be otherwise? It is in accordance with all analogy. The place of one's natural birth, and of his early life, is always invested with an interest which no other spot on earth can ever possess. It is present in his thoughts and in his feelings. Neither length of absence nor distance of locality can ever obliterate it. If its scenes have, for any good reason, adorned the pages of the historian or the traveller, he fain would thread every line of the book in which they may be described. Why, then, should it not be quite as much of a pleasure, and even a profit, to the converted person to read in after years a description of his spiritual birth-place, or of the place of his consecration to his Maker and Redeemer? and possibly of the very scene which surrounded him when the Dayspring from on high visited his benighted mind, or the sanctifying power of the Highest made him whole.

It may be replied, also, that others not personally the subjects of the work of grace at that specific

time and place, will nevertheless love to see permanently embodied an account of a great work of God in the hearts and lives of their fellow-men.

Surely, then, if the foregoing remarks are true, some account of a place consecrated by so many and so great displays of divine mercy as have been witnessed and realized in "WESLEYAN GROVE" for more than twenty years, can but be greeted by the lovers of Christ and his cause as at least an acceptable memento. And, indeed, may not such a memorial of those divine manifestations have a tendency to lead others to avail themselves of the great and glorious provisions of salvation through a risen and ascended Redeemer, and to seek the soul-inspiring scenes of this, or some other place of divine worship, that they, perchance, may also be helped into the heavenly Bethesda?

Do not the above considerations afford a sufficient reply to the question raised? And may I not add, that should the preparation of the following work result in a single case such as in the preceding paragraph is supposed possible, it would many thousand times compensate for time and labor bestowed.

EDGARTOWN, *August*, 1858.

INTRODUCTION.

THE practice of holding camp meetings was first introduced by the Presbyterians and Methodists, together, in the State of Kentucky, in the early part of the present century. It was soon after adopted by the latter denomination in the New England States, as well as in various other portions of the country. While our Presbyterian brethren and others who early participated in both the labors and the blessed results of these meetings, have nearly or quite given them up, except as occasional attendants on the services, they have been made by the Methodists one of the most distinguishing of the extra means of grace employed by them for the spiritual benefit of the churches and the conversion of lost men.

From different classes in the community, and even from many professing Christians, there has been much opposition manifested against these religious

gatherings in the tented grove. But notwithstanding all the honest demur of some good people and the malicious clamor of the wicked — even charging upon Christians the villany perpetrated by themselves, for the purpose of bringing these occasions into ill-repute, — the salutary effects of these meetings have been most triumphantly demonstrated. They have been signally owned and blessed of God. Thousands upon thousands have at these assemblages become the subjects of converting grace, while many tens of thousands of the professed disciples of Christ have experienced the quickening or sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost. But for such meetings, multitudes of the former class would never, perhaps, under any circumstances, have come to the knowledge of the truth. And is it not matter for devout thanksgiving to God, that many thus happily converted have become ornaments to the churches with which they have subsequently united, and powerful agents in His hands in carrying forward the great and glorious work of human salvation ?

The preparation of a site for the accommodation of a camp meeting, the arrangements and fixtures, need not here be described minutely, as these meet-

ings have now become so common that most persons know something of their outline. It may be remarked, however, that as of late they are more permanently established in particular locations, for a series of years, and as more people of wealth patronize and attend them, the outlay for convenient and permanent fixtures has been correspondingly increased. It is thought by many, however, that the great object of such gatherings was formerly more fully attained than it now is ; that the preachers and church members then engaged more heartily and devotedly in labor for the glory of God and the salvation of souls than they now do ; and that thus, as a consequence, more signal displays of divine power were realized. There may be some truth in these views, but there is much less, we imagine, than is often supposed. Yet it must be confessed, that, considering the great increase of the numbers of professing Christians assembling, our meetings seem to partake more, relatively, of the social character, and less of the spiritual, than they once did. Still, a large portion of both the ministry and laity are as devoted and laborious as ever, and oftentimes great numbers of sinners are saved. To such as come merely or

S.M.T.I.

LIBRARY

mainly for other purposes than those strictly spiritual, it may be said, that although the physical and social benefits of such a gathering of Christian friends — where they can untie themselves from the cares and trials of business, live under nature's arbor, breathe a pure air, acquire and satiate a good appetite, and exchange friendly greetings — that although all these are indeed great benefits, and amply sufficient to compensate for all the expense of the sojourn, yet the chief object should still be the cultivation and strengthening of the moral and religious principle in ourselves and in all believers associated with us, and striving to bring our unconverted fellow-men to the cross of Christ. Would that in this respect, as well as in many other things, the simple-hearted earnestness of the fathers were more fully adopted by *all* their sons.

THE LOCATION.

Camp meetings for this section had been held twice or thrice at Falmouth, perhaps as many times at Monument, in the town of Sandwich, and once at the Vineyard, on the west side of Holmes' Hole Harbor. Neither of these places was such as to

invite to a permanent locating of a camp meeting for the portions of country for which the meetings named were held. Subsequently the site now known as "Wesleyan Grove" was selected and marked out by the late Jeremiah Pease, Esq., of Edgartown, and was repeatedly commended by him to the attention of both ministers and laymen, till it was finally determined, to hold a meeting here, and the use of the premises was secured by lease. The meetings held here have, however, been appointed from year to year; and what is known as the "Vineyard Camp Meeting," has been made permanent only by such continued re-appointment.

"WESLEYAN GROVE" is in the town of Edgartown, on the island of Martha's Vineyard, State of Massachusetts, near what is known to seamen as the East Chop of Holmes' Hole Harbor. It is about seven miles from the town, and between five and six from the village of Holmes' Hole, by the usually travelled roads; but from the last named place it is nearer by water. It is a grove of venerable *oaks*, of many acres. It has a pond on one side, and open fields on nearly all others. It was the property of William Butler, Esq., late deceased,

of whom it was first leased for the purpose of a camp meeting. The site of the encampment is about one-third of a mile from one of the principal landings, and about one mile from the other. The area is very even, being slightly inclined towards the stand, and towards the main entrance. The water at the landings is quite bold, so that steamboats and sail vessels can approach within a very few rods of the shores; and at the west landing there is now a wharf, to which steamboats and vessels can come to land and take in passengers and freight.

From the bank at the eastern or nearest landing, is a fine prospect. At the south-east is the town within whose precinct you stand, and its vicinity, including the Harbor and Cape Poge lighthouses. Before you, some six or seven miles on the opposite shore, it being the main land, is the town of Falmouth. The beautiful sheet of water between you and it is the Vineyard Sound, extending in from the left in the direction towards New York, and widening away to the east between Cape Cod and the island of Nantucket. On this sound pass yearly many thousands* of vessels, of all sizes and descrip-

* By actual observation, more than sixty thousand sail of vessels pass here yearly, *in the day-time only*.

tions, — whalemén, merchantmen, coasters, fishermen, steamboats, &c. It is the great marine highway between New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, &c., on the one hand, and Boston and the giant East on the other. It is also the track of the steamer plying between Edgartown and New Bedford. From the other landing, which is at Eastville, you have a fine view of Holmes' Hole, at the head of the harbor of the same name, the West Chop and Light, and a more extended view of the west arm of the sound. Falmouth and vicinity are also in full view from this point.



WESLEYAN GROVE CAMP MEETING.

THE FIRST CAMP MEETING.

THE first camp meeting held in this beautiful grove was in the year 1835, and commenced on Monday the 24th day of August. A meeting has been held here every year since, excepting that of 1845, when it was removed to Westport Point.

The area cleared up for the purpose at this time was quite limited in extent. A small rough shed had been erected, as usual, called the "Preacher's Tent," with an elevated seat and stand in front to answer the purposes of a pulpit. In front of this was the usual arrangement of a temporary altar, consisting of a railing

enclosing about twenty-five feet by twelve, of ground, with seats to be used, mainly, by the singers in time of the public preaching service, and as a place for penitent sinners to come into from the congregation for the prayers of God's ministers and people during the time of public prayer meetings, which generally follows the afternoon and evening sermons.* Beyond the altar were some rough board seats for the accommodation of the congregation.

Only *nine* tents graced this first circle. There might, perhaps, have been some sails extended in rear of the tents, for awnings, under which to take meals. A well had also been dug for the supply of pure water.

The Presiding Elder of the District, being unable to be present, requested that the Rev. Thomas C. Pierce might be ap-

* These prayer meetings are now often held, in the daytime, in the open space in the rear of the seats.

pointed to superintend the meeting. He conducted the first public exercise, which was on Monday evening, at which he delivered a forcible, an affectionate, and a well-timed address. On Tuesday morning, brother Pierce having called together the preachers present, he was unanimously chosen Superintendent of this camp meeting. A Secretary was appointed, and sundry rules and regulations were agreed upon. These rules were daily announced from the stand. In the account of the meeting published in *Zion's Herald*, the Secretary says: "Be it spoken to the credit of this community, and of the people who attended from different places, that in general they manifested the greatest readiness to conform to our rules as soon as they knew them."

The number of preachers in attendance was of course small; the exact number is not now known. Nor are the names of those who preached on the occasion now recollected, except two or three. They are not given in the report.

The meeting was one of great spirituality. Both ministers and people seemed each to understand their appropriate work, "and to attend to it." "The preaching was 'in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power;' usually followed up by warm and forcible applications and exhortations." The waving trees, the whispering breeze, the pathetic appeals, the earnest prayers, and the songs of praise, as well as the trembling of sinners under the Word, and the shining countenances of Christians lighted up with holy joy, all conspired to say "Surely the Lord is in this place."

Of the immediate effects it is stated, that "soon after the afternoon sermon [of Tuesday] a public prayer meeting was held, at which it was believed eight souls were converted to the Lord." The published account of the meeting thus continues:

"On Wednesday, the work of the Lord progressed among us, and new victories

were achieved. The exercises of the public prayer meeting in the afternoon, and of public preaching in the evening, were prevented by the rain. We regretted that many friends, and probably many anxious inquirers after the truth, were obliged to leave the ground; but, on the other hand, our brethren, being confined to their several tents, had a better opportunity to labor for God, and for the unconverted in their own companies, and also to get to their own souls a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit. The public prayer meeting on Thursday afternoon was powerful and glorious, and there were several conversions."

"Friday was emphatically 'the great day of the feast.' Heavenly music saluted our ears at an early hour, which if it could not be called 'a serenade of angels,' was certainly that of happy souls saved from sin. The spirit of devotion during the morning exercises in the tents was deep

and general, among the hosts of God's elect.

“On Saturday morning, after a short and appropriate address from our Superintendent, (who we ought by the way in justice to say, had presided through the meeting to the acceptance of preachers and people,) and prayer by brother A. Holway, we formed a procession and took our leave of each other in the usual manner. The benediction was then pronounced. The scene was truly affecting. We parted, but we hope to meet again.

“We think the number converted during the meeting is very safely computed at sixty-five. The work is spreading on the island. Among those converted during the encampment were men of high respectability. On the morning of the close, when assembled near the stand, some two or three hundred brethren and sisters in the Lord arose from their seats and stood awhile, in testimony that God had deep-

ened the work of grace in their hearts during the meeting. Six souls were reclaimed."

Of this camp meeting it is well remarked, "The prayer meetings *in the tents* were usually well attended."

"After the morning preaching on Friday, a meeting of all the preachers and official members present was called, at which it was unanimously voted to adopt measures to purchase the lumber of which the seats, the preachers' tent, stand, &c., were built, that it might remain upon the ground, with a view to make this a permanent place for camp meetings for several years to come. The owner of the land has freely given his consent that these meetings should be continued here. Nearly money enough was raised on the spot at two collections, to cover the whole expense of the present meeting, and to purchase the lumber."

Thus we lived, labored, and rejoiced, in

what may not inaptly be termed "primitive simplicity." And thus ended our feast of "the first year" in this newly consecrated temple.

THE SECOND MEETING, — 1836.

This meeting commenced on Monday, Aug. 22, and closed on the following Saturday morning. The Presiding Elder not being present, Rev. James C. Bontecou, the preacher stationed in Edgartown, was chosen president of the meeting. In addition to the preparations made last year, the fixtures of the ground had been considerably improved.

The Secretary, in his published account of this camp meeting, says: —

"Brethren were present from New Bedford, Fairhaven, Falmouth, Nantucket, So. Yarmouth, Sandwich, Fall River, Bristol, and several other places. Our meeting

was more fully attended than it was last year; and in general the congregation demeaned themselves with sobriety and decorum. Although the civil authorities here have pledged themselves to protect us on such occasions, in the enjoyment of our civil and religious rights, yet they had no occasion for legal interference."

The first sermon on this occasion was from Rev. John Lord. His text was John xi. 5, 6.

The others who preached at the stand during the meeting were, on *Tuesday*, Abram Holway, Phineas Crandall, and Elijah Willard; on *Wednesday*, Philip Crandon, Shipley W. Willson, D. K. Banister, and J. B. Brown; on *Thursday*, Salmon Hull, J. Lord, and Josiah Litch; on *Friday*, D. Leslie, P. Crandall, and J. Whittlesey. The sermon of Br. Leslie was in behalf of the missionary cause. He truly had the spirit of the missionary in him. He it was who soon after this volunteered to go, by

appointment, with the self-sacrificing Jason Lee, to labor as a missionary among the Flat-head Indians, in the wilds of Oregon. He took his family with him, thus laying his all of this world upon the altar of God. He was fervent, earnest, direct. His sermon on this occasion was truly soul-stirring.

A set missionary sermon may appear to have been inappropriate to the immediate objects of a camp meeting. But why should it not be regarded as in perfect keeping with the designs of a great religious gathering, held by a people who are preëminently missionary, even in their general system of operations for the recovery of lost men? And then the work of saving sinners from the darkness and error of their ways, is one and the same on Martha's Vineyard and in Oregon.

The weather at this meeting was very propitious. The Report says:

"Just previous to our meeting we had sufficient rain to lay the dust, and were

then favored with a serene atmosphere nearly the whole of the time. Last year, the people had more time for devotion in the tents, on account of rainy weather; this year, the people of different classes and views had a better opportunity to hear preaching and to witness our devotions."

Of the general character of this meeting, and its results, the following statements were made:—

"Much might be said in regard to the labors and usefulness both of preachers and members generally. But perhaps I ought to remark, that some of our official brethren, in particular, were very useful. There was much of the spirit of devotion manifest in the very commencement of the meeting, and the successive exercises of each day bore ample testimony that the God of armies was present to lead on the hosts of our Israel to successive conquests. There were many triumphs of truth over error, and of holiness over sin.

“The love-feast, on Friday morning, was a time of general victory and of general triumph with the people of the Lord. The work of grace was mostly in the church and among backsliders, of whom a great number were reclaimed. About twenty were converted to the Lord. One of the converts was a Papist.”

The preachers present at this meeting, as well as those who attended here last year, even the aged and more experienced of them, were unanimous in pronouncing this the best place for a camp meeting of any they had ever seen.

The accustomed and truly affecting parting ceremony was observed early on the morning of the close, accompanied by the parting hymn; and then favoring breezes wafted us onward to our various homes.

THE THIRD CAMP MEETING,—1837.

This commenced on Monday, the 14th of August, and continued, as usual, till Saturday morning.

Who presided at this meeting does not appear from any authentic source. Rev. Phineas Crandall, then stationed in New Bedford, was appointed the Secretary, H. Vincent having served in that capacity the previous two years.

The weather much of the time was quite unpleasant. But twelve tents were erected, with perhaps a small boarding tent or two. There were seventeen preachers present.

As most of the available information respecting this meeting is to be obtained from the report of it furnished by the Secretary, and published in *Zion's Herald*, and as, moreover, that report contains a very true and lifelike description of it, I will here give that account nearly entire.

“The grove selected for this meeting is one of the most charming I have ever witnessed. I have attended forty camp meetings, save one, but have never before seen so beautiful a spot for this sacred purpose. An intelligent visitor of the meeting last year called it ‘the beautiful — yes, more than beautiful — grove. Such a grove,’ said he, ‘I did not know that New England contained.’ This I pronounce to be one of the best locations for a grove meeting I have ever known. It is accessible by water from every direction, and cut off by a natural barrier from the populous towns, whence we are usually annoyed by the ‘baser sort of fellows.’ The sheriff of the county is an influential member of the church, and his presence is sufficient to command the most perfect order.

“Many of our friends assembled on Monday, though the weather was quite unpromising, and erected most of their tents. The number of tents was small, there being but

twelve, and the number of people proportionably small, owing, doubtless, to the forbidding appearances of the weather. The number of preachers was seventeen. On Wednesday and Friday the rain prevented the holding of public meetings. There were several sermons, however, delivered in the largest tents, and the remainder of the time was spent in prayer meetings, and speaking meetings, after the manner of the love-feast. It was thought, so far as the members were concerned, that the rainy portions of the time were the most profitable. Thursday was a fine sunny day, which gave the people from the adjacent neighborhood an opportunity of attending to hear several impressive sermons, which evidently produced a good influence on the interested hearers. The largest congregation at any time was supposed to consist of about two thousand persons. Perhaps the same number of members never became more deeply engaged in striving for the

higher attainments in grace on any like occasion than on this. There seemed to be a universal spirit of agonizing prayer for 'all the mind of Christ.' Nor was this shed forth upon the people in vain. Before the meeting closed, the language of victory was heard on every side. The number of conversions was probably about twenty.

"On Saturday morning, pursuant to previous arrangement, the people were called to the stand to unite in prayer and praise, and to listen to an address from our venerable Father Kent. He addressed the people for about thirty minutes, in his usual happy style. His words were attended with a holy unction to the souls of the believing multitude. Nothing could be more appropriate than the advice which dropped from his lips at this parting scene.

"After lingering about this hallowed spot for an hour or two, during which time the incessant sound of praise was reverber-

ating through the foliage of the grove, and the tents were striking, the people embarked for their respective homes, to carry and scatter a sanctifying influence in their societies and neighborhoods."

THE MEETING OF 1838.

Our fourth meeting held in this grove commenced, properly, on Wednesday, the 28th of August; although, by some misunderstanding of the appointment, our New Bedford brethren came to the ground on the day preceding, and Father Kent preached to them in the evening from Psalm cxii. 7. It appears that this camp meeting was held over the Sabbath, being the first of the series here which had been so held.

The Presiding Elder was present at this meeting, and preached one of the sermons. We are not informed who this officer of the

church was at the time, but think it must have been Rev. Bartholomew Otheman. The other ministering brethren who preached during the meeting, either at the stand, or in some of the larger tents when prevented by the wet from assembling at the stand, were Revs. O. Robbins, W. Emerson, J. D. Butler, J. C. Bontecou, J. Steele, F. Upham, M. Staple, S. Phillips, R. D. Easterbrook, J. T. Burrill, T. G. Brown, H. Mayo, O. Wilder, D. K. Bannister, A. Kent, P. Crandall, S. Hull, and J. B. Brown. Some few of these preached more than once; although none, except one or two of the venerable fathers, preached more than once from the stand.

The report of this meeting was furnished for the "*Herald*" by Rev. Franklin Fisk. In it Br. Fisk says:—

"As we awoke on Saturday morning, our ears were saluted with the noise of the rolling thunder and the falling rain; but our hearts said '*It is well*;' and so it proved

to be, for thereby the interest of the meetings was considerably increased."

The close of this day he thus describes :

"At 10 o'clock, as on all preceding nights, silence reigned throughout the encampment ; but balmy sleep and heavenly dreams hid not for a moment the Lord from our eyes, nor abated the sense of his presence."

The following is the account given of the Sabbath, with its sacred exercises and ceremonies : —

"Early on Sabbath morning the place was vocal with songs of praise and thanksgiving. At 5 o'clock the sound of the trumpet called us to the stand, from which Father Steele addressed us, on '*Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace ;*' and never did wisdom's ways appear more pleasant, or a Sabbath morning more hallowed. At 8 o'clock the Lord's Supper was administered, the consecration, &c., being performed by the Presiding Elder ; about twenty ministers assisted in the

administration to about three hundred participants. It was a time of thrilling interest. It did indeed seem, as one was heard to say, 'that mercy was dropping down from the smiling skies.' After this solemn ordinance, a public prayer meeting was held; and to those seats where the Lord's people had been receiving the tokens of mercy, the anxious sinner was invited to approach. Several came, some of whom then and there found rest. At 10 o'clock, a large congregation orderly and silently seated themselves before the stand, and listened, as though enchained, to a discourse pronounced by Father Kent, founded on Numbers xx. 12. Many felt to mourn their former ways, and broken resolutions were renewed.

"In the afternoon, Br. Crandall addressed us from Acts xv. 14, 15, during which the fixed attention of more than one thousand auditors gave evidence that the Lord was opening the hearts of many. At 5½ o'clock

we engaged in a public prayer meeting, and the melting mercy of God was truly with us.

“Br. S. Hull preached in the evening, from 1 Samuel xvii. 36, 37, after which prayer meetings were held in the tents till 10 o’clock, when all peaceably retired.”

At this camp meeting many were reclaimed from a backslidden state, and about twenty were converted. The church, also, shared largely in the blessings by which they were to bless the world.

In the opening paragraph of his article, Br. Fisk thus speaks of this beautiful and hallowed retreat:—

“BR. BROWN:—We have just returned from the camp meeting held in the delightful grove on Martha’s Vineyard, than which a more beautiful was never graced with such a scene. I have attended three camp meetings on this ground, and have heard many ministers express their opinion in regard to its location, and other conveniences; their *opinion*, I say, for I have heard but *one* ex

pressed, and that is, that in any respect it is not excelled by any spot which they have ever seen; and that in *all* respects, considered collectively, it excels them *all*. I know not how it could be much improved. Indeed, the order of man would mar it, for God has honored it with the impress of himself."

The report closes as follows:—

"On Tuesday morning, the congregation came together for the last time. The services commenced by singing the beautiful hymn,

‘Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love,’

which was followed by prayer, and an impressive address by Br. Burrill. Then came the parting scene, which was most affecting. It was a scene of ‘pleasing grief and mournful joy.’ But we parted, though

‘It gave us inward pain;
But we shall still be joined in heart,
And hope to meet again.’ ”

A law for the protection of camp or field meetings had been passed at the last session of the Massachusetts Legislature, and approved by the Governor, April 17, 1838. Although we were not so much in need of additional and special legislation to aid in securing good order in this, as they are in some other localities, still, even here its influence might be needed. It was a very opportune enactment, and is well calculated to subserve the cause of camp meetings in this State. As it is a matter of interest connected with such assemblies, I have thought it well to give a copy of it in this connection. It is as follows:—

“An Act for the protection of Camp Meetings against disturbance.”

“Any person who, during the time of holding any camp or field meeting for religious purposes, shall, within one mile of the place of holding such meeting, hawk or peddle any goods, wares, merchandise, or drinks, or practise or engage in any gam-

ing or horse-racing, or exhibit, or offer to exhibit, any shows or plays, shall forfeit for each offence a sum not exceeding twenty dollars, to be recovered on complaint made to any justice of the peace of the county in which the offence is committed: *provided, however,* that this act shall not be construed to require any person having his regular and usual place of business within the limits aforesaid to suspend such business."

THE CAMP MEETING OF 1839.

This was the fifth meeting held here. It commenced August 14th. This also continued over the Sabbath. The number of tents had increased to *seventeen*. Including the Presiding Elder, there were twenty-six preachers in attendance. Among these were several brethren from a distance, and some of somewhat marked traits of ministerial character. Rev. Jared Perkins, of

the N. H. Conference, well known as a man of good pulpit talents, and who had filled some of the highest positions in his Conference, was present and preached. Rev. John Allen, of the Maine Conference, familiarly known as "Camp Meeting John Allen," was with us this year, and by his characteristic, devoted, and earnest labors, assisted much in promoting the interest of the meeting. Then there was our old friend, the spiritual father of many on this favored isle, the Rev. John Adams; often styled "Reformation John Adams," from the fact that reformations had so commonly attended his labors. Of him, the Secretary of the meeting, Rev. Samuel W. Coggeshall, says in his published report, that he "appeared to be as much devoted to his Master's work as ever, and into which, upon this occasion, he entered with his usual zeal and efficiency. The Vineyard, in former years, was the scene of some of brother Adams's most successful labors,

where he joyously reaped a glorious harvest of souls, among whom are some of the most respectable people of the island, who now, with their children, gathered around him with happy faces to offer their kind salutations."

Here was also that worthy and venerable father in the ministry, the Rev. Daniel Webb, whose shrill voice was as charming as ever, and whose graceful and elastic step showed that although somewhat advanced in life, years had not yet got the mastery over manhood. He was the oldest preacher upon the stand at this time. In making the opening address at the love feast on Sabbath morning, the Secretary says, he "took occasion to notice the rapid enlargement and great prosperity of the Methodist church since he became connected with her, and to contrast her former with her present condition; in which, with other things, he remarked, that he was happy to say that she had increased

in spirituality and in holiness, as well as in numbers; that those who suppose that Methodism is not now as pure and as holy as it was in former years, are greatly mistaken; that, indeed, the cause might have declined in some particular places, but so far as the general work is concerned, he was sure it was far otherwise."

Brother Coggeshall goes on to remark: "Father Webb has been forty-one years in the itinerant connection,—more than one half of the whole period of the history of our church in America,—and having been himself during that time, an active agent in the work, he may surely be esteemed a competent witness in this matter. It is to be hoped, that they who are accustomed to compare the former with the present time to the disparagement of the latter, some of whom were not born when this witness entered the work, will be pleased to notice his testimony."

Nor must I omit to mention as being

present at this time, that clear-headed theologian and powerful preacher, now sainted father, the Rev. Isaac Bonney. His sermons were not only heard, but *felt*. In his address to the people at the closing service, he spoke to them of the "*past*," and exhorted them "to take heed to what they had heard," for the "*future*."

From the account of the meeting we learn that although there were but comparatively few conversions, yet the general interest of the meeting seemed to have increased from former years with the increase of numbers attending. The preaching was plain and direct, some of the sermons displaying marked ability. The meetings held in the tents when the weather was inclement, were, many of them, attended with powerful displays of the Holy Spirit. At the love-feast an unusually large number testified of the enjoyment of perfect love. Several of the preachers were of this number. The speaking generally was

in a clear and forcible manner. The report says: "The Lord's Supper was administered to two hundred and thirty-seven communicants, beside the preachers. It was a season of great power and solemnity, in which many were refreshed with the bread which cometh down from heaven, and with the new wine of the kingdom. The spectators of this scene, who surrounded the table, looked on with the most intense interest and apparent pleasure; and as mere spectators of that glorious scene, we fear, were even many of our own people, who dared not approach the table to commemorate the death of Him through whose grace they hope to be saved. May God give them grace for greater faithfulness for the future."

Brother Coggeshall expressed the opinion, in his printed report, that "one reason why so few were actually converted, was because our brethren brought so few of their unconverted friends with them.

Those who come in the beginning of the meeting, and who remain through it, are those who are usually saved, while but little hope can be entertained for those who merely come to stay a day as spectators, and who are so taken up with the novelty of the scene as to pay no attention to the word of God. Let those believers who wish a blessing at a camp meeting, come at the beginning; and if they want their unconverted friends saved, let them bring them with them at the same time."

From the following extracts it appears that this meeting did not suffer at all in the comparison with its predecessors, as it respects the good order observed:—

"One pleasing circumstance attending this meeting was the excellent order preserved throughout. At 10 o'clock all was still in the tents, so that the slumbers of those who were wearied with travel, or with the exercises of the day, were not

disturbed by the ill-timed noise of their thoughtless neighbors, who suppose that God can be served and honored by disturbing the patience, and needful repose of his own people. No mingling of unhal- lowed enthusiasm, nor the kindling of false fires, appeared in the religious exercises of the people. The spectators, also, mani- fested the utmost propriety and decorum in their behavior; and so far were they from attempting to create any disturbance, that scarcely the smile of contempt, or the curled lip of 'the scorner,' was to be seen.

"At this meeting no useless committees were appointed to do the work for which a man is already appointed. This was com- mitted to the Presiding Elder, to whom it belonged, who by his zeal and vigilance tempered with moderation, we believe, gave universal satisfaction."

Near the close of this camp meeting, sundry resolutions were passed in a meet-

ing of preachers and others, relating to centenary collections for various objects. It was also voted not to have the meeting next year hold over the Sabbath; but to have it begin on Monday and close on Saturday of the same week.

THE CAMP MEETING OF 1840.

This meeting commenced August 10th. Rev. B. Otheman, Presiding Elder, superintended it, and Rev. S. W. Coggeshall was reappointed Secretary.

Bro. Jeremiah Pease was chosen chorister, and Bro. Alanson Gammon, of New Bedford, his assistant.

At one of the previous camp meetings a committee of three brethren, viz: Thomas M. Coffin, Isaiah D. Pease, and Jeremiah Pease, had been appointed for the purpose of obtaining from the owner of these premises, William Butler, Esq., a lease for the

term of five years. Such a lease was secured by them on the sixteenth day of the preceding November, and was now, at one of the business meetings held on the ground, submitted for approval; and it was, by vote, approved. This lease embraced what is usually denominated "Great Pasture;" which includes, in addition to the grove in which the camp meetings are held, a very considerable extent of the adjacent lands.

It is quite certain that either at the meeting of 1838, or at that of 1839, the subject of *a name* for this consecrated spot was discussed, and that the one by which it is now called was agreed upon. But there is now no written evidence of the fact at hand. Whether or not any such action had been taken, the record of this year's meetings for business contains a formal vote, "That the grove be called WESLEYAN GROVE." This movement for giving a name to this beautiful place, which even at that time had become somewhat noted, was doubtless sug-

gested by the fact that the brethren assembling at Eastham, where camp meetings had also been held for several successive years, had at one of their recent meetings honored their hallowed grove with a name, which was "Millennial Grove."

Up to this time no permanent record of the doings of our business meetings, which are held upon the ground for the furtherance of the objects of the camp meeting, had been kept. The Secretary's annual report of the camp meeting, published in *Zion's Herald*, occasionally alluded to some action of the brethren thus convened, but could not, of course, be expected to preserve the proceedings in detail. During this camp meeting, however, the purchase of a book was authorized; and one was accordingly procured, in which the doings at this, and every succeeding camp meeting held here, have been entered—usually by the Secretary of the meeting for the time being.

At this meeting there were sixteen tents

erected, beside some small ones, the occupants of which belonged to the large. There were present eighteen preachers.

The Secretary, in his report, says :—

“The congregation was quite large and respectable, through the whole progress of the meeting, and it would have been much larger, had it not been for the inclemency of the weather on Thursday and Friday; as large numbers had made arrangements to be present on those days. A universal interest seemed to have been awakened in favor of the meeting, in some of the neighboring societies, so that they sent out larger companies than formerly.”

He adds :—

“The meeting began, progressed, and ended in the Spirit. Many seemed not to have waited until they got there to be quickened, but came already so. For this reason, the brethren entered upon their work at once, even from their first entrance upon the ground, and pursued it with un-

tiring ardor and perseverance to the end. Not an unprofitable public meeting was held. All were with power, and in the demonstration of the Spirit.

“The public service commenced on Monday evening, by a sermon from the Presiding Elder, from Genesis xxviii. 16, 17. ‘Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not. How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.’ A very appropriate text.

“The next day Rev. John Adams came upon the ground, and in the evening, after a sermon from Br. Campbell, from 1 Tim. iv. 8, followed with an exhortation full of interest, power and pathos, which produced a most happy effect upon the minds of the people.”

Again he says: “The meeting seemed to increase in interest and power to the very last.”

As the New Bedford brethren were to

leave very early on Saturday morning, the closing exercise was held the previous evening at 6 o'clock. Of the address of the Presiding Elder on the occasion, Br. Coggeshall remarks: —

“This address was the most profitable and interesting of the kind to which I ever listened. It consisted of a particular notice of some of the practical duties of the members of the church of God, which were explained and enforced with great power and effect. The particularity of this address, which brought it home to the bosom of every hearer, was one of its chief excellences. We trust it will long be remembered, and will do permanent and lasting good.”

The usual parting ceremony was observed, following the address.

The following tribute to the people and the place is also from the Secretary's pen:—

“The most excellent order and decorum were preserved throughout the meeting, so

much so that not even a watch was required by night. All slept as quietly and securely in their tents as in their own houses at home. Indeed, so respectful and decorous were even the giddy multitude who attended the meeting, that a look of scorn and contempt could not be seen. All the preachers present who had never before attended a camp meeting on the Vineyard, were unanimous in awarding the meed of praise to its people in this respect. The superior loveliness and beauty of the spot seemed also to secure their admiration."

He thus sums up the results:—

"As nearly as I could ascertain, about *twenty* souls were either reclaimed or converted to God, during the progress of this meeting, more than a third of whom were saved after the parting services. Many more were also awakened who we trust will be soundly converted to God. But to the believers present it was a season of peculiar interest and profit. 'In that moun-

tain the Lord of Hosts made unto them a feast of fat things; a feast of wine on the lees; of fat things full of marrow, of wine on the lees well refined.' Many of them, we trust, will have occasion to remember the Vineyard camp meeting of 1840, for many years; yea, through eternity. As the tents were struck on Saturday morning, many seemed to say, 'I wish the meeting would last a week longer,' such was the deep impression it made upon their hearts, and such were the hallowed associations with which it was connected in their minds."

It was voted to hold the meeting between Sabbaths next year.

THE CAMP MEETING OF 1841.

Our excellent Presiding Elder, the Rev. Bartholomew Otheman, was again in attendance with us, and superintended the meeting with his accustomed energy and ability.

At this meeting, as at a few others, *two* Secretaries were appointed: one to record the doings of the business meetings, and the other to report the religious aspects and results of the camp meeting for publication. On this occasion, H. Vincent was chosen for the former purpose, and Rev. Joel Knight, of precious memory, for the latter. Br. Knight, however, declining to act in that capacity, was, on motion, excused, and Rev. George F. Pool was elected in his stead.

It seems that although at the last camp meeting the brethren voted that the meeting this year should be held between Sabbaths, the Presiding Elder, — for reasons which do not appear on the record, but which, when presented by him, were voted to be satisfactory, — had made a change in the day of commencing, so that the meeting commenced on Tuesday evening, and closed on the following Monday morning.

The number of tents had increased to twenty in the front circle, in addition to

which there were several family and provision tents in the rear. About twenty-five preachers were present, and nearly eight hundred persons encamped on the ground. Various prudential regulations were adopted.

The opening sermon was preached on Tuesday evening, by Br. Otheman, from "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord." Of this sermon, Br. Pool, in his notice of the meeting, says:—"As the meeting progressed, many were led to reflect that this subject was prophetic of that gracious outpouring of the Spirit, which was so obvious throughout the whole encampment." And of the preaching generally at this meeting he remarks:—

"There was evidently no attempt at what is commonly styled great preaching. The topics selected were emphatically evangelical and practical. Depravity, atonement and holiness were prominent subjects."

The names of those who preached, with the exception of the superintendent, are not given. The celebrated temperance lecturer, John Hawkins, was present, and addressed the assembled multitude — said to have been about three thousand — from the stand, on Sabbath afternoon.

“During his address, which continued two hours and fifteen minutes, he gave a thrilling relation of his own experience. He threw into his subject a heart warmed with the love of God, and made frequent and effectual appeals to the conscience of the sinner.”

By voting Br. Hawkins the opportunity of occupying so important a portion of time, the brethren thus testified their hearty approval of the great temperance enterprise, and also that efforts for the promotion of this cause were in perfect harmony with those made to further the highest religious interests of mankind.

The usual camp meeting love feast was held, and the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was celebrated.

At the close Bro. Otheman gave an affectionate address, which was followed by the usual parting ceremony.

Bro. Pool thus concludes his report of this excellent meeting:—

“We only begin to speak of the immediate effect of the meeting when we say that about twenty souls were converted to God. The work of grace was confined principally to the church, and here it was manifested in a wonderful manner. The prevailing sentiment seemed to be entire consecration to God. An unusual degree of brotherly love and Christian simplicity prevailed. Strong faith and earnest wrestling characterized the prayer meetings, and the spirit of God wrought in such a manner as the Vineyard camp meeting had never before witnessed. The cry for a clean heart became general, and the Lord answered in the full salvation of many souls. Numbers who are not easily excited were shorn of their strength, and lay for hours without the

power either to speak or move. Some who had doubted the reality of such exercises looked on in amazement, and exclaimed with the Psalmist, 'This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.'

"The order of the meeting was uninterrupted throughout. No undue levity, no smile of contempt, no gatherings for fruitless discussion were observed during the meeting. The Spirit of God pervaded all hearts, and every one who entered the sacred enclosure seemed to realize that it was holy ground.

"The Vineyard camp meeting is destined to rise in importance, and the Wesleyan Grove in future years may become a rallying point for multitudes. A convenient landing, level ground, a delightful grove, and an abundant supply of the sweetest water, are among the inducements which this place holds out to the lovers of camp meetings.

"May the fire which has been kindled at

this meeting continue to burn until the regions round about shall be wrapped in one flame of revival."

At one of the business meetings it was voted that any surplus moneys accruing from the collections taken to defray the expenses of the camp meeting, be appropriated to assist in liquidating the debt incurred by our friends in this place, (Eastville,) in the building of their meeting house.

As this meeting was found to be increasing from year to year, in the number of preachers as well as in that of the laity, it was voted to have ten feet added to the west end of the preachers' tent and stand.

Isaiah D. Pease, Esq., was appointed a committee of arrangements for the next year.

THE MEETING OF 1842.

This meeting commenced August 17th. Rev. B. Otheman was again our President, and again preached the opening sermon. His text was: "What think ye? that he will not come to the feast?" Bro. G. F. Pool, who was again the Reporting Secretary, says that "before the close of the meeting hundreds could respond to the text, and from overflowing hearts could say, 'Yes, He has been here in deed and in truth.'"

Rev. Charles S. Macreading was chosen secretary of the business meetings. At this, as at other like gatherings, various committees were appointed for the maintenance of order, taking up collections, &c.

The Missionary Society of the M. E. Church having accumulated a heavy debt, which had recently been apportioned upon the several annual Conferences, the breth-

ren at this camp meeting, with a view to further the raising of the amount allotted to the Providence Conference, appointed a committee, consisting of Revs. A. Kent, A. U. Swinerton, and N. Paine, to consider and report upon the subject. This committee, at a subsequent meeting for business, reported an apportionment of the amount on the several districts; and their report was accepted so far as related to the Providence District.

The condition of the financial affairs of the Providence Conference Academy was also laid before the preachers and tent-masters' meeting, for their consideration; and it was voted to lay it before the people at the time of public service.

As the Secretary's report of the more prominent features and results of this camp meeting is quite short, being condensed, and full of interest, I here insert the larger portion of it connectedly:—

“There were upon the ground more

than forty tents, containing eleven hundred and eighty-nine persons, being five hundred more than were present the last year. The congregation on the Sabbath numbered about two thousand and five hundred. If we may judge of the ultimate by the immediate effect of this meeting, we may conclude that the final results will be glorious. As near as could be ascertained, more than fifty persons were converted, twenty-three were baptized with water, and a great number were baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire. The burden of almost every sermon was 'holiness to the Lord;' and the great struggle in the tents was for full salvation. God was present by his Spirit to break up the great deep of the heart, and to fill the believer with perfect love. The influence of this meeting must be felt long and far; and, we doubt not, the flame which God has kindled in our hearts will spread and burn through all the surrounding region. The love-feast on

Sabbath morning was a season of thrilling interest. In the space of an hour about one hundred and fifty persons brought in their testimonies; the most of which were pointed professions of perfect love. A veteran Wesleyan arose, and, standing among us as one who had come down from a former age, declared that he had conversed with Wesley.

“But, after all, Monday was the great day of the feast. An awful sense of the presence of God pervaded the whole encampment, and the slain of the Lord lay upon every side. On Monday evening the public services closed with the usual parting ceremony, and at eight o’clock we retired to our tents to besiege the enemy in his lurking places. The battle waxed warmer and warmer till after ten o’clock, when the enemy gave way and the shout of triumph rang through all our lines. Some now retired to rest, but many remained upon the field to celebrate a glorious victory.

“At half past two o'clock on Tuesday morning the encampment was aroused by a procession of singers, who after marching several times around the circle, engaged in a prayer meeting which continued till broad daylight. Several of the companies left the ground in marshalled processions, and moved to the shore singing the songs of Zion. O, that the spirit of this meeting may be infused into the whole church!”

It will be seen that the “parting ceremony,” as it is called, was observed at this meeting as it had been at several preceding ones. As this ceremony may not be understood by all, I will here just observe that it consists of walking in procession, two and two, around the area within the circle of tents, singing at the same time some appropriate hymn, and finally all halting, and then each passing by every other one, taking them by the hand and bidding them “farewell!” The scene is often most affecting. Christian ministers

and brethren who have been together here in the tented grove, mingling their prayers and praises to Jehovah, and laboring together for the same object, viz., the salvation of undying souls, now separating, many of them never to meet again till the great day of final judgment, of which day, indeed, a camp meeting, as has often been remarked, more strikingly and impressively reminds one than any other scene on earth. This is truly a ceremony on which multitudes of spectators look with the deepest emotion. Hard and stoical must be the individual who could feel otherwise, and from whose eye would not steal the tear of sympathy, if not that of penitence or of joy.

It was voted to have the next camp meeting commence on Wednesday, instead of Tuesday. It will have been observed that no uniform day of the week had ever been fixed for beginning our camp meetings, nor yet any set number of days for them to

continue. The question whether it were best to hold the meeting over the Sabbath, or only between Sabbaths,—commencing on Monday and closing on Saturday,—was one which had been discussed many times, and has been many times since. Brethren frequently differ in their opinions on this subject, and each meeting determines it only for its immediate successor. Bro. Isaiah D. Pease was again appointed to have charge of the camp ground for the year to come.

THE CAMP MEETING OF 1843.

This meeting commenced on the 9th day of August. At a meeting of the preachers and tent-masters, Rev. Charles S. Macreading was reappointed Secretary. Although the record and a printed notice of the camp meeting both recognize the presence of a Presiding Elder, yet in neither is the name given. Probably it

was our ever prompt and energetic President, Rev. Frederick Upham, of the New Bedford District.

Nor does it appear from anything official who was chosen to report for publication in the paper. There was no account of the meeting in the *Zion's Herald and Wesleyan Journal* till about two weeks after the close. Then an article was furnished by our much devoted (now sainted) brother, Rev. Otis Wilder, containing a report *in part*. It was not, however, written officially. From a single allusion in this article, we infer that Rev. David Patten had been designated as the Reporting Secretary. We are not now sure whether any account of the meeting was prepared by him. The same general rules were adopted for the government of this camp meeting as for that of the last. It was ordered that they be recorded.

At one of the business meetings, Rev. Thomas Ely introduced a set of resolutions

having reference to the M. E. Church in Fall River, which had suffered much from the recent great fire in that place. The resolutions were passed, and ordered to be published in the *Herald and Journal*. An effort was also made to aid these brethren.

The subject of preserving the Sabbath inviolate was much discussed, and the following vote was passed: “*Voted*, That it is the sense of this meeting that the making of all business contracts on the Sabbath is a violation of God’s law.” A committee was appointed, consisting of A. U. Swinerton, H. Vincent, and J. Lovejoy, to address our community on this subject.

From the article of Bro. Wilder, referred to, I make the following extracts:

“Suffice it to say, (which was, is, and ever will be, ‘best of all,’) I, with hundreds of others could say, ‘God is with us.’ Not only the natural, but also the spiritual rain descended richly, refreshingly and copiously upon us, agreeably to the prom-

ise, Ezek. xxxiv. 26: ‘And I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing.’ The promise in the preceding verse was in like manner verified: ‘They shall dwell safely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods.’ I had not learned the number of conversions up to the time I left, which was Monday, A. M. The meeting was to continue one day longer than was published in the *Herald*.”

The following is a well-remembered incident:—

“There was one exhibition at that meeting which was peculiarly interesting and affecting to me, such as I never before witnessed. It was that of a pious female, a worthy member of Bro. Swinerton’s charge in New Bedford, who was both deaf and dumb, addressing a public congregation by signs, and relating, by her appropriate gestures and striking expressions of countenance, the dealings of God with her soul,

her conviction for sin, conversion to God, the happiness she then enjoyed, the prospect which was before her, and the anxiety she felt that all would come to her Saviour. Twice she thus spoke by the special request of her friends, and once voluntarily. How much more, thought I, would it be for the glory of God, the good of their own souls, and their usefulness to others, if every member of the M. E. Church who has ears to hear and a tongue to speak was as willing to bear the cross and witness for God as was this pious, though mute, sister in Christ. May all who read this consider that it is required of them according to that which they have received. 'Freely ye have received, freely give.' "

This camp meeting was continued, as remarked by Bro. Wilder, a day or two longer than was originally designed. The reason seems to have been, that such a deep and pervading interest was manifest, the brethren were unwilling to break up

and leave. The undying interests of souls seemed to require this continuance.

The number of persons converted at this camp meeting we have no means of knowing definitely; but, according to our best recollections, it was quite large.

THE CAMP MEETING OF 1844.

This was our tenth meeting of the kind held in this consecrated grove. It commenced on Wednesday, August 21st, and closed on the following Tuesday morning.

Rev. Frederick Upham, of the New Bedford District, was our Superintendent. The duties of the secretaryship, which had several times been divided between two individuals, were this year assigned to one.

Usually, we are unable to have any public religious service on the first day of

meeting until evening; but this year our friends were so early upon the ground that we had preaching in the afternoon. Rev. A. H. Newton was the preacher. In the evening we were addressed by our venerable father, Lewis Bates.

The hours designated for preaching were, as usual, 10, 2, and 7 o'clock.

On Thursday we had sermons from Bros. Paine, Wheeler, and Winchester. The preaching exercises this day, as they were generally through the meeting, when practicable, were both preceded and followed by prayer meetings in the tents.

The Secretary adds:—

“Indeed, this was so strictly attended to, and our time so fully employed in these and other devotional duties, that many of us had very little time for speculation, or even for friendly visits and salutations with old acquaintances. The different companies, with their pastors, seemed unusually disposed to stay at their own temporary

homes, united and intent on promoting their own spiritual interests and those who might be convened with them. Well will it be for us when we attend such extra means of grace, if we 'always mind the same rule.' Our work was before us, and the Lord was present to afford the needed help in doing it. This was a good day for the church. The excellent sermons with which we were favored were backed up by searching and thrilling exhortations from brethren appointed for the purpose."

"*Friday.* On account of the storm, which rendered it impracticable to have service at the stand, there was preaching in several of the larger tents in the forenoon by Bros. J. Livesey, W. T. Harlow, G. F. Pool, and J. D. Butler; and in the afternoon by Bros. Bates, Beedle, Cone, and Turkington. In the evening from the stand by Bro. E. B. Bradford. God overrules the changes in the elements above for our good. 'Prayer ardent,' the prayer of faith,

was heard and answered. His salvation was poured down upon us. We number eight souls converted to-day, several backsliders reclaimed, and much quickening among professors of religion."

On Saturday we were instructed from the stand by three venerable fathers in the ministry, viz., A. Kent, D. Webb, and E. Blake.

The published report of this meeting relates that "a very pathetic appeal was made to the congregation in the afternoon, by Bro. House, of New Bedford, in favor of a good colored sister, late from Brooklyn, N. Y., who is soliciting assistance to purchase her son from slavery. Fifty dollars only were asked for by Bro. H., although several times that sum was needed to accomplish the desired end. About sixty dollars were contributed. At the request of some friends who wished to contribute, but desired the gratification of seeing her whose heart was to be made glad by their

benefactions, she was conducted on to the preachers' stand, where, with covered face, she was heard by a few who stood near her, in a subdued tone of voice which indicated deep emotion, to thank us for our well-timed aid."

The services and incidents of the Sabbath were all so full of interest that I cannot well refrain from giving the Secretary's report of them without diminution.

"Sabbath morning, in all its hallowed glory, at length arose upon us, and with it rose the bursts of hallelujahs from the hosts of our spiritual Israel. At half past seven o'clock we were gathered at the stand for a love-feast. Nor shall we soon forget that occasion, for it was decidedly one of the best meetings of the kind we have ever attended. We had many rich testimonies on the subject of holiness. In all, sixty-eight persons spoke. It was a pleasing family interview, at which many spoke of their age in Christ. It also very forcibly

reminded us of the day of Pentecost; for although we could not say that we had testimonies from ‘Parthians, Medes, Elamites,’ &c., yet we *did* hear speak in the language in which we were *spiritually* born, Americans, a Swede, a Swiss, an Englishman, an Irishman, and one of the descendants of Ham. But the most soul-stirring part of the whole was, to *see* a deaf and dumb sister * *speak by signs* of the goodness and ‘wonderful works of God,’ the substance of whose testimony was interpreted by Bro. Pool, a former pastor of the church to which she is attached. There was no Ashdod in the language of those who testified for Christ on this occasion. Many of us felt more like building more durable ‘tabernacles’ here than we did like quitting this ‘mountain of holiness.’

“Preaching this day by Bros. Upham, P. E. House, and Pool, in the order in which they are named. The arrival of two steam-

* The same one named as being present the preceding year.

boats, one from Nantucket and another from New Bedford, with large numbers of passengers, together with many smaller conveyances, swelled the congregation to a size which we think was never exceeded on this spot, if indeed it was ever equalled. From very accurate estimates it is believed there could not have been many less than three thousand, although less than one thousand was the greatest number tenting on the ground. The preaching was powerful. In the afternoon seekers were called forward, and several converted at the altar. The prayer meetings in the tents in the evening were characterized by deep emotion. There was an ardent struggling for deliverance from sin, for spiritual strength and full salvation. The writer was present at one peculiarly of this description. After remaining on our knees for nearly an hour, one of the heaviest tempests came over us that has been known in this vicinity for several years. But we

still remained for a long time in suppliant attitude before Him in whom we trusted. The vivid flashes of lightning played about us, but did not harm us; the rain descended; and as the almost deafening claps of thunder broke near us, seeming to rend the very heavens, the repeated response at the top of the voice of 'hallelujah' from a devout minister of Jesus, accompanied with expressions of praise to God from many others of the company, presented a scene of moral sublimity which it is utterly impossible to describe. The remembrance of it can never be effaced from my powers of recollection. God kept Israel in peace this night."

There was preaching at the stand on Monday by the venerable Daniel Fillmore and Bro. P. Crandon. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered to about four hundred communicants, including twenty-eight ministers. Some few received the ordinance of baptism during the

meeting. The evening of this day being rainy, there was preaching in several of the tents; but the prayer meetings in others were in such active and determined operation that the brethren were unwilling to stop them, and the work went on till a late hour in a manner which baffles description. It was afterwards remarked by some person, "I heard no one during that blessed night talk of seceding from the church on account of the coldness of its members or the tyranny of its ministers."

The last public exercise was held early on Tuesday morning, when we were appropriately addressed by our venerable Father Kent, and received the benediction from our excellent and indefatigable Presiding Elder. During the meeting, *thirty-four* persons had been converted, beside the many who had been reclaimed, quickened, or otherwise benefited. Many left the ground under deep conviction of their lost state.

The Secretary in his report says:—

“ When calling around at the tents for information on these subjects, on the morning of separation, the following are among the answers received. A brother at one of the tents said, ‘ We are almost all sanctified in our tent; ’ at another, I was told, ‘ We have had clean victory in our tent; ’ and at another, I was directed to ‘ report Fourth street tent all in order. ’ ”

It seemed almost sacrilegious to quit holding camp meetings at this place; but at a meeting of the preachers and tent-masters, on Saturday, it was voted not to hold any more meetings in this grove at present. [Our present lease of the premises was about to expire.] The Secretary says:—

“ It was distinctly avowed that this course was not prompted by any want of appreciation of the excellences and advantages of the site; nor any feelings of hostility to the friends here, but by the

consideration that, it having been held here for nine successive years, it had become 'an old story,' and that to remove it to some other place, where such meetings have never been held, would be calculated to accomplish a greater amount of good. There were a few dissenting voices. It has since occurred to one brother, that although 'an old story,' the unusually full attendance, the deep concern manifest, and the glorious results, have demonstrated that the age of the story has not very materially lessened the interest felt in it, after all; and it is hoped by some of the friends that, if our brethren who favored the removal become weary of their pilgrimage elsewhere, they will, at no very distant day, make it convenient to revisit the spot, hallowed by a thousand enrapturing associations, and sacred to the name of the founder of Methodism."

It was voted to dispose of the fixtures of the ground, and a committee of seven

was appointed to carry that decision into effect; and our President, Rev. F. Upham, was chosen a committee to fix on a site for holding the camp meeting next year.

After describing the closing religious services, before alluded to, the Secretary thus remarks:—

“Here followed a scene of a more painful cast,—the taking down of tents, (about forty in number, including boarding and other smaller tents,) the hurry and bustle of the companies and of teamsters in the removal of goods, and the sale, at public vendue, of the preachers’ tent and stand, and other fixtures of the ground, on which I have not time to comment.”

During this camp meeting, the brethren in the ministry present made arrangements for holding a “Preachers’ Meeting,” for New Bedford District and vicinity, for mutual improvement, &c. This contemplated gathering subsequently took place in New Bedford.

We reluctantly left this spot, hallowed by so many Christian victories and endearing associations.

The Secretary of this year concludes his report as follows:—

“With the relation of a single circumstance I will close this account, the length of which you will excuse, as this is the last meeting we are to have, at least for the present, and I could not possibly do it justice in a less extended notice. Among those who attended with us was one of the noble sons of the main, who had but recently returned from the conducting of a long but prosperous voyage. He had a beloved wife whose name was on the roll of the church, but he did not profess faith in the Saviour. But he came to accompany her and attend the religious exercises of the occasion. His heart melted, he bowed with us repeatedly in prayer, when earnest petitions went up in his behalf. We trust God heard and answered, and

created him anew. On Monday he found himself so fast faltering under the power of disease, which had evidently been preying upon his system for several weeks previous, that he left us and returned home. The next that we heard from him was on Tuesday evening, after we had also returned from the grove, and were just going to the house of the Lord for prayer. The solemn announcement fell upon our ears, 'Capt. Abraham Lewis is dead!' O how timely did he seek his God! Sinners, delay not to follow his example, for you may die as suddenly as he."

THE YEAR 1845.

It is thought proper to give in this connection some account of the meeting this year, both because it was one held for the same portions of territory as had been

those at the Vineyard, and was an excellent meeting; and also because it was a connecting link between those already held on the island and the ones which followed.

The place selected for this camp meeting was in the town of Westport, Mass., near Westport Point. The grove was tolerably good, yet the ground was quite rough, but the brethren of that vicinity had been untiring in their labors properly to prepare it, especially the preacher in charge of the station, Rev. Adin H. Newton, who had so exhausted his physical energies as to prevent him, in a great measure, from enjoying the religious services of the occasion. An excellent boiling spring of water near by conduced greatly to the comfort of the encampment.

The meeting commenced on Tuesday, Aug. 12th, and closed early on the following Tuesday morning. Rev. F. Upham, P. E., was the President, and H. Vincent, Secretary.

The public exercises were commenced at the stand on the evening of the first day, by Bro. John Allen of the Maine Conference. He gave us an energetic and well-adapted sermon from Neh. iv. 6, "For the people had a mind to work." Preaching at the stand during the encampment by the following brethren, in the order in which they are named. On Wednesday, A. Gardner, R. M. Hatfield, W. Cone, and H. Vincent. On Thursday, W. T. Harlow, J. B. Husted, and J. D. Butler. On Friday, D. Webb, Dr. Charles Pitman of New York, Missionary Secretary, since deceased, and S. Beedle. On Saturday, A. M., by I. Bonney, and in the afternoon, it being somewhat rainy, there was preaching in several of the tents, and in the evening, by C. Noble, at the stand. On the Sabbath, J. S. House, Dr. Pitman, and R. M. Hatfield. On Monday, A. M., preaching in several tents; P. M. by A. U. Swinerton; evening, I. Washburn.

Superior pulpit talents were displayed in

the sermons of the venerable Fathers Webb and Bonney, and in those of Dr. Pitman. We felt that it was a privilege to be highly prized, to sit and learn at the feet of these Gamaliels of the Christian church.

The Secretary's report says:—

“The general good order and decorum of the congregations on each day of the meeting, not even excepting the vast concourse gathered on the Sabbath, estimated at between five and six thousand, and the deep solemnity which seemed to pervade the minds of almost every one, were clearly indicative of a profound consciousness that Jehovah's presence was there. On Sabbath afternoon especially, while the vast multitude were held in almost speechless admiration by Dr. Pitman for the space of about an hour and a half, while discoursing upon the parable of the Talents, it seemed as though the Holy Spirit pervaded every mind, and penetrated every heart. We cannot doubt

that in numerous instances, 'the word of the Lord did not return unto him void, but accomplished that whereunto he sent it.' We confidently expect that *hundreds* of those who shall finally be gathered into God's garner above, will date their successful awakening at the camp-ground at Westport Point; and that the seed of eternal truth there sown in the hearts of the people will very generally germinate, as some of it has already, and that its fruit will flourish in rich reversion in eternity."

The usual love-feast was held, and the sacrament of the Lord's Supper administered. It was considered very safe to put down the number of conversions at twenty.

The presence of an esteemed brother in the church, Mr. John Wilde, of Duxbury, during the latter part of the meeting, who aided in the singing by his well-trained and stentorian voice, contributed much interest to the public exercises.

There were present about forty ministers, travelling and local.

AN INCIDENT.

At the communion season on Monday, after the exercises of that sacred occasion were through, Dr. Pitman craved the privilege of addressing the assembly for a few minutes. Adverting to the fact that he represented the great missionary interest of our church, he remarked that although the privilege of taking up a missionary collection during the meeting had been kindly and repeatedly tendered to him by the Presiding Elder, yet, owing to the fact of the enormous bill of expenses imposed on the friends for preparing the ground, [most, if not all of which bill, however, was unavoidable in the circumstances,] he could not have the heart to ask them for a collection. But if any one had any thing he or she *wished* to give, it would be received. Whatever was done in this way, he desired should be considered as a special offering, and not to operate as

a drawback upon their regular missionary operations. He could not consent, he said, that "basket, plate, or hat" should be passed round; but he chose that whatever was given in this way should be put into his own hat, standing on the table. He proposed and promised, that whatever was given on the occasion should be appropriated to pay the passages of the several missionaries about to embark for Africa; a sum sufficient for that object being wanted. The proposition thus happily made could not certainly have succeeded better had it been specially designed to answer the objects of a collection. The doctor's hat was placed upon the communion table, and the scene which ensued was one of most thrilling interest. There was a *gust* of Christian sympathy and benevolence, followed and accompanied by a rush of brethren, sisters and friends, (apparently vieing with each other in works of Christian valor,) to cast their offerings into the

treasury of the Lord. All this was accompanied with such a hallowed, consecrating spirit,—yea, such a baptism of the Spirit,—as beggars description, but which gave most indubitable proof that the work was a good one, and one which our Heavenly Master greatly approved. After much had been thus deposited, including some articles of jewelry, the proposition was made to raise \$20, to constitute Sister Beedle, who was a mother in Israel, a convert under the labors of Bramwell, and mother of Bro. S. Beedle, now stationed in New Bedford, who had been in this country about seven weeks, and now on the ground, and whose gracious words in our love-feasts had blessed our hearts, a life member of our Parent Missionary Society. The proposition was promptly made up, the finishing of which was by the presentation of a gold pencil (by a sister from New Bedford,) valued at \$7. When Sister Beedle was made acquainted with the nature of the act which

related to her, she came forward, expressed her thanks in warm terms, and made a very fine missionary speech. The whole sum obtained, including jewelry, was about \$120.

The proceeds of the sales of the camp meeting fixtures last year, at the Vineyard, were applied to defray, as far as they would go, the expenses of preparing this ground.

Greatly as we had enjoyed this assembling of the people, it was thought best by the brethren, in view of the inconveniences of approaching the place, especially by water, not to hold a meeting here another year. The lumber used in preparing the ground was therefore ordered to be sold, and it was voted to hold a camp meeting, next year, at East Greenwich, R. I. It was also proposed to hold another in Warcham, Mass., many brethren thinking it would be well to hold *two* for the sections of country for which but *one* had heretofore been held. It was finally, on motion, voted to leave the determination of this proposition to the

Presiding Elder and the preachers stationed in the vicinity of Wareham.

An appropriate and well-timed address from our presiding officer closed the meeting here, and we again decamped.

On our way to New Bedford, on board the fine steamer Massachusetts, Capt. Lot Phinney, Master, Dr. Pitman, by the request of the company, preached a most able and soul-stirring sermon. It was none the less interesting for being unpremeditated. Tears moistened the eyes of many present, not excepting those of our excellent and noble-hearted commander.

THE CAMP MEETINGS OF 1846.

In accordance with a vote of last year, a camp meeting was held during this summer at East Greenwich, R. I., which the Secretary's report shows to have been attended with good results.

The committee appointed at the Westport meeting to ascertain and determine on the feasibility of holding a camp meeting in or near Wareham, satisfied themselves that it would not be best to hold one at that place or vicinity. As but few of the friends in this section could make it convenient at this time to go to East Greenwich, and many still feeling a strong attachment to and preference for the old site on Martha's Vineyard, and being, moreover, fully satisfied that it was the most eligible for the purpose, of any in all this region, it was determined to occupy it again this year. Accordingly a lease of the premises was obtained of the existing proprietors, Stephen H. and Harriet Bradley, by Sirson P. Coffin and Charles Worth of Edgartown, and Charles Weeks of Chilmark; the appointment for the meeting was published, new materials for a preachers' tent and stand, and for seating the ground, were procured, and all prelim-

inaries duly arranged. The meeting commenced on Monday, Aug. 3d, and closed on the following Saturday morning. Old "Wesleyan Grove" again resounded with prayer and praise, and it seemed to many who had been so long accustomed to attend here, that having been sojourning for a while elsewhere, we had returned to our old home again.

Rev. F. Upham presided at this meeting with his characteristic, true Christian dignity and energy, and Rev. David Patten, Jr., was chosen to perform the duties of Secretary.

The bills for newly preparing the ground, amounting to \$174.98, were nearly all met by collections in the tents and in the public congregation, and the balance was ordered to be hired, with the expectation of paying it next year.

Bro. Patten, in his published report of this meeting, says, "The pleasantness of the

place, and the beauties of the charming grove,

“ ‘ Whose stately oaks stand up sublime,
Like pillars, to uphold the green and tasselled roof
Of nature’s leafy temple,’ ”

have been more than once described to the readers of the *Herald*. The present year, however, we found our ‘ leafy’ sanctuary enlarged, and furnished with new seats, and with a new and nicely finished “ stand,” located more eligibly than in former years, for the comfort and convenience of the audience. Thus delightfully situated, and with these improvements, it is believed that “ Wesleyan Grove ” is a well selected, and perhaps unequalled spot for our yearly solemn convocations.’ ”

Our excellent Secretary further describes the scene and services as follows :—

“ Few who were present will soon forget the place, or the interests of our recent meeting. In its progress and results, it is generally acknowledged to have been the

most interesting and glorious of any yet held on that consecrated ground. Every thing, both in nature and the dispensations of God toward us, conspired to render the occasion impressive and memorable. During the entire week the sky above us was cloudless, while the Sun of Righteousness was shedding down his mild and softening beams upon our hearts. The elements around, as if rapt in devotion and fearful of interrupting the solemnities of the place, hushed themselves; while the ungodly, as they approached, were so affected with the spirit of reverence and fear, that the writer of this has yet to learn that any one manifested the slightest disposition to disturb the meeting. God was indeed in the midst of his people, drawing their hearts sweetly together, and all hearts to himself. The Spirit was present to soften and subdue the rebellious, and regenerate and fully sanctify all that called upon his name."

The names of those who preached at this

meeting are not given in the published report. But the Secretary says of the public discourses, that "the subjects were various, and well adapted to the wants of the congregation; and the truth of God was elucidated and enforced in a simple, practical, evangelical, and earnest manner. The people heard the word gladly, and the gospel proved to be the wisdom of God, and the power of God unto salvation. The only criticism I heard among the nearly forty preachers who were present was, 'How well the brother preached — how appropriate his subject — how searching the application — truly God was with him.'"

The number of conversions at this meeting was rather small, — being only about twelve or fifteen, — but the general quickening among the professed disciples of Christ was great and glorious. This result of the meeting was such as to be regarded as the greatest cause of rejoicing.

Dr. Pitman was with us again this year,

and although during a part of the meeting in a state of comparative physical prostration, yet he so far recovered as to be able to lift up his voice and proclaim to us "the acceptable year of the Lord."

The following brief extract and note must finish the sketch of this meeting:—

"The prayer meeting at the stand on Wednesday evening, when heaven and earth seemed to meet together, and angels and men to mingle their sympathies and rejoicings; the love-feast, in which even the *dumb* spake, and the people wondered; the missionary meeting, in which, after an eloquent and earnest address by Dr. Pitman, our Missionary Secretary, the multitude rushed with eager haste to throw their offerings into the treasury of the Lord,—an account of these and other interesting and affecting incidents of the meeting may be given you by another hand."

Probably no such additional account was written. At any rate, the author of this knows of none.

THE CAMP MEETING OF 1847.

This meeting commenced on Monday, Aug. 23d, and closed on the following Saturday. Rev. F. Upham again presided.

The friends in Providence and vicinity, not thinking it advisable to hold a meeting in East Greenwich this year, many of them came to this; and thenceforward this has been made *the* camp meeting for the whole of what has sometimes been denominated the New Bedford, and sometimes the Providence District, and for about one-half of the Sandwich District.

Bro. Upham requested of the brethren that Bros. D. Fillmore and A. U. Swinton should be associated with him in making the appointments for preaching. His request was acceded to.

The custom of holding preachers' prayer meetings was adopted,—an excellent thing.

The published report of this meeting says: —

“Some of our friends came from great distances and at considerable sacrifices, but God has rewarded and will reward them. About the usual number of tents adorned our bowery retreat, and about the usual number of friends lodged on the ground. Our congregations were large, attentive, and solemn. An excellent spirit, the hallowing spirit of love and of grace divine, pervaded the encampment from the first to the last. Peace and harmony reigned in all our borders. We have had many good meetings on this hallowed spot, but, for the excellency of its spirit, never one better than the present. So say many dear brethren who have attended here from year to year. One of the aged fathers in the ministry, who had never been with us in this grove before, but who had attended a great many similar meetings elsewhere, declared that although he had been present

at larger meetings, he had never attended one that proceeded so much to his mind as this. The fact is, we had not only great peace among ourselves, and good management by our superintendent and others who had charge of the public exercises, but, truly, ‘The Lord was with us for our captain, and his priests with sounding trumpets.’ ”

For the first public exercise, instead of a set sermon, we had addresses from several brethren with especial reference to the best methods of getting good and being useful at a camp meeting. The first tune was thus wisely selected, and it was rightly pitched.

We had preaching during the week from Revs. C. H. Titus, P. Townsend, — Trakey, John W. Hardy, A. U. Swinerton, E. Grant, D. Fillmore, E. B. Bradford, T. Hardman, J. Cady, F. Upham, and J. D. Butler. Many of the sermons were truly able, in the popular acceptance of the

term; and all of them were in the style of eloquence which the Holy Spirit inspires. At the love-feast on Friday, the remarks of some of the fathers were very affecting and instructive.

We had public prayer meetings each afternoon, after preaching, all of which were occasions of great interest and power. Such an exercise on the first day of the meeting was something rather unusual, but it was peculiarly owned and blessed of God. Many came immediately forward when the circle was formed, to the anxious seats, for prayers, not waiting for solicitations; and several, on this first occasion of the kind, and first day of the meeting, found peace in believing. On each succeeding day our meetings increased in interest and power. Many were "the slain of the Lord." Many backsliders were reclaimed, our brethren generally were much quickened and encouraged, and, as nearly as could be ascertained, about thirty souls

converted. But it may be truly said of this, as of all similar meetings, the full amount of good accomplished cannot be estimated from what appeared. Its influence will go out into the churches and the world, and will be accurately known only in eternity.

This sacred retreat, hallowed by a thousand pleasing remembrances, seemed to us more glorious, if possible, than ever before.

It was decided to have the meeting next year commence on Tuesday and close on the Tuesday following. Bros. Sirson P. Coffin, Abraham Anthony, and Charles Worth, were appointed a committee to make the necessary arrangements for the next meeting. As that meeting was to hold over the Sabbath, it was, on motion, "*Voted*, That this meeting respectfully request the owners of the steamboats not to run their boats on the Sabbath on which our camp meeting is held next year, for the purposes of transporting passengers to and from the

meeting." It was also voted that the Secretary forward a copy of the above vote, at the proper time, to the captains of the steamboats.

Sundry resolutions were passed, severally authorizing the Committee of Arrangements to procure new leases, including one of the dwelling house in the vicinity, should they think fit; to make such provision for strangers visiting the ground as they may judge proper; and also to adopt such regulations relating to the prices of straw, milk, cartage, and all other matters having reference to the financial interests of the meeting, as they shall conclude will be for the best.

THE CAMP MEETING OF 1848.

This meeting commenced August 8th, and was presided over by Rev. Thomas Ely, who succeeded Bro. Upham as Presiding Elder of the New Bedford District.

108 WESLEYAN GROVE CAMP MEETING.

Although many came on the ground on the first day of the meeting, the number greatly increased on following days. Several tents graced the circle for the first time. The whole number in the grove was sixty-four. Many more of our friends tented upon the ground than ever before. The congregation on each day was proportionally large; on the Sabbath it was estimated at between two and three thousand. Friendly salutations and greetings contributed, as usual, to the enjoyment of the occasion. Similar meetings having been held here for many years, members of different societies had formed Christian acquaintances which it was pleasing to renew from year to year.

The public services at the stand were commenced on Tuesday evening by an appropriate sermon from Bro. E. Grant. Preaching on Wednesday by Bros. J. E. Gifford, W. Richards, and W. Cone. On Thursday, by J. Cady, R. W. Allen, and T.

Hardman. Friday, by J. Livesey, D. Webb, and J. Lovejoy. Saturday, Robert Allyn, W. Livesey, and H. Baylies. Sunday, C. H. Titus, R. Livesey, and F. Upham. Monday, N. Goodrich, S. W. Coggeshall, and H. W. Houghton. The sermons were all forcible, and well adapted to the occasion. Most of them were followed up by exhortation from other brethren.

Public prayer meetings were held each afternoon, in which many were born of God. On Thursday and Friday mornings, at half past eight o'clock, public meetings for prayer and exhortation were held at the stand, in which both ministers and laymen participated. On Saturday morning a similar meeting was superseded by one at which excellent and appropriate addresses were delivered by Bros. W. Richards of Monument, Robert Allyn, Principal of our Conference Academy, and R. W. Allen of Providence, on the subject of early religious training, especially in connection with the Sabbath

School. At the conclusion, the baptismal service was read by Bro. R. W. Allen, and the ordinance of baptism administered to several children by Bro. F. Upham. Altogether, this was one of the most interesting exercises of our meeting. May the spiritual interests of our children, in which consist the highest hopes of the church, never be lost sight of by our ministers and people.

There were about four hundred and fifty communicants to whom the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered on Sabbath morning; and at the love-feast on Monday, one hundred and twenty-five persons spoke. At the close of the latter occasion, a liberal collection was taken up to aid two of our preachers who have hard fields of labor with but very stinted means of living.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS.

Many sought and experienced a deepen-

ing of the work of grace. Many backsliders and lukewarm persons were reclaimed; about forty souls were converted, and large numbers left the ground impressed with a sense of their need of salvation through the atoning blood of the Redeemer.

The weather during the meeting was very fine.

At one of our business meetings, the preachers and brethren present voted unanimously to request Father Webb, who had now been in the ministry about fifty years, to preach his semi-centenary sermon at the next session of the Providence Conference, and also repeat it at our camp meeting in this place next year.

Our meeting closed early on Tuesday morning, 15th inst., with appropriate exercises at the stand, conducted by Bros. F. Upham, R. W. Allen, and Thomas Ely, the excellent Presiding Elder of New Bedford District, who had discharged the duties of President of this meeting efficiently and effectually.

112 WESLEYAN GROVE CAMP MEETING.

This mode of closing by a meeting at the stand simply, followed by a promiscuous leave-taking, has been most commonly practised of late years, instead of what is usually called the "parting ceremony," elsewhere described.

After dismissing the assembly at this time by the benediction, a collection was taken among the friends present, which fully met the deficiency in the sums previously obtained to pay a small debt before existing, and to defray the reported expenses of this meeting.

The following extract is from an article in the *Herald and Journal*, soon after this meeting, written by a gentleman who was present from Providence, R. I. Coming by the way of New Bedford, he gives a brief description of that thriving city, and then says:—

"We stepped on board the steamer Massachusetts, about 2 P. M., and arrived at the camp ground about 4. Here we found

all busily engaged in making preparations for the meeting. Soon, however, the preparations were disposed of, and the meeting commenced. Not to enter into particulars, we must say it was a glorious meeting. The preaching was excellent, singing good, and the praying earnest; and we trust it was in faith. Some of the prayer meetings were attended with unusual power. The Holy Ghost was poured out abundantly. Several were sanctified, and about forty converted. Blessed results!

“The meeting closed on Tuesday, the 15th inst., and most had an opportunity of reaching their homes the same day. A happier company I seldom if ever witnessed. May the Lord bless them still more, and prepare them for great usefulness in their respective fields of labor!

“But the place of the meeting,—who can properly describe it? Such another spot can hardly be found on earth so nearly resembling Eden in its primeval beauty and

loveliness. The curse of sin has indeed come over it, but it must be pronounced one of earth's loveliest spots. The dread of dying would seem to be partially destroyed, if we could but 'fall asleep' in such a place. We earnestly hope that all who can consistently, will try to see the spot before they die. It seems to me that after seeing it, heaven will, if possible, become more attractive than ever. I rejoice that another meeting of the kind is appointed there for next year. If you can, reader, by all means attend it.

“A LOVER OF CAMP MEETINGS.”

THE MEETING OF 1849.

Commenced on Monday, the 20th of August, and closed on the following Saturday. Rev. Thomas Ely was again present, and presided. Bro. Sirson P. Coffin was constituted a member of our business meetings,

being Chairman of the Committee of Arrangements. The same individual was appointed a committee for the year ensuing, and was authorized to obtain a lease of this ground, at reasonable rates, for *ten years*. Also, the same authority which had been vested in this committee for the last two years with regard to financial matters generally, was now conferred on him.

All expenses were fully met. A new well was ordered to be dug.

This beautiful place seemed, if possible, more delightful than ever before. And although many prophesied evil as the result of our gathering here this year, while the prevailing pestilence was so fearfully raging in our country, and although many of our friends tarried behind, and some others ventured to come, not without fear, yet others met with us this year who were not accustomed to do so, so that the number tenting on the ground, as also that of the congregation, was about as large as in any

former year, excepting, perhaps, one or two, when the meeting has been held over the Sabbath. And our brethren generally came up with an humble but firm trust that God would favorably regard his people and preserve us here in the wilderness. Nor was our confidence either presumptuous or misplaced, as the result proved. The salutary regulations for our meeting, adopted by the Edgartown Board of Health, contributed not a little to the health of the encampment. These, together with the precautions of the people with regard to the character of their diet, and other means, were crowned with the divine blessing, so that the multitude assembled were probably never more healthy on a similar occasion. Indeed, some of us *invalids* retired at or near the close with *improved* rather than impaired health. This is in fact an excellent place for persons in poor health to resort to. The pure, exhilarating air under the shade of the tall oaks, the

heartly greetings of old friends and acquaintances, the customary exercise of walking, and above all, the animating devotions of the occasion, all tend to enliven the spirits, aid circulation, and sharpen the appetite for wholesome food. I do not hesitate to avow the belief that, not to speak of the spiritual benefit, which is to be prized above all price, the Christian invalid will realize greater improvement in health by coming and living prudently a week in "Wesleyan Grove," drinking of the living fountain of salvation that gushes up so freely and plentifully here, than from a journey to the "White Mountains," or a month's residence at "Saratoga Springs."

A much larger number of the ministers of Christ were present than at any previous meeting here. We numbered some fifty-three of our own denomination, beside several of other branches of the church. Such a body of ministers, of course, embraced a great variety of age and talents.

Here was the youthful soldier, with elastic step, scholastic air, and studied diction, yet intent on doing his duty in the great work of the Gospel ministry. Here, also, was the man of middle age, firm of nerve and fired with zeal for God and for souls. And here, too, the aged and venerable, with silvered locks and furrowed cheeks, just ready to let fall their mantles upon their rising sons. The names of such men as the venerable Webb, Bates, Hardy, Otis and others, will long live in the church.

The names of the brethren who preached during this meeting are not given in the published report. It is stated, however, that the preaching on the occasion was generally of the right kind, and well-timed.

The half-century sermon of Father Webb, delivered by request of the brethren at this camp last year, was listened to with deep interest, and with peculiar feelings of regard and veneration for our worthy father in the Gospel, who had been in the ministry over fifty-one years.

There were about fifty tents this year. The usual good order prevailed. There was an uncommon spirit of harmony, as well as deep devotion.

Some of the public prayer meetings were very powerful, especially the one after preaching the last night of the meeting, at which it was thought not less than fifteen souls were born of God. It is always somewhat difficult to be able to affirm with certainty the exact number converted at a camp meeting, but as nearly as could well be ascertained, the whole number thus saved at this meeting was quite safely computed at fifty, several of whom were members of the Sabbath School. Besides, many backsliders were reclaimed, and the members of our churches quickened. It was indeed a time of great spiritual joy. The interest felt was somewhat heightened by the fact that several of our brethren and others were about to leave this vicinity for California.

Speaking of the beauties and adaptedness of this memorable place, the Secretary thus concludes the last paragraph of his report:—

“There is, indeed, in connection with the stirring power of the Word of Life here so faithfully dispensed, the ardent praying, and the pervading effusions of the Spirit, an eloquence in ‘scene and song’ which would render a panorama of a camp meeting held here, could it be taken to the life, a far more delightful and enduring monument of moral beauty, than is Banvard’s Panorama of the Mississippi, of artistic merit.”

THE CAMP MEETING OF 1850.

This commenced on Thursday, the 15th of August, and held till the following Wednesday morning. Rev. Thomas Ely, Presiding Elder of what had been called New Bedford

District, but now Providence District, was again our Superintendent.

Sermons were preached by the following brethren successively, to wit: Chase, Burnham, Cone, Atwater, Webb, Swinerton, Otheman, Marsh, Hobart, Husted, Goodrich, R. W. Allen, Grant, Richards, Case.

There were about fifty ministers present more or less of the time during the meeting, including several of other denominations. Many of these servants of the Lord proved themselves, by their works, to be in the true succession of the apostles of the Lord. Some of them, like Hannah of old, brought their dear children to this modern Shiloh, and gave them to the Lord. May all the Samuels thus dedicated be like Samuel of old.

The meeting was larger than ever before. Besides the usual means of conveyance to the place, a large steamer had made two trips hither from Providence and other principal points on the Narraganset, bringing

many hundreds. There were about three thousand people present on the Sabbath. There was a much larger number of tents on the ground than ever before — eighty-seven of all classes — and the numbers tenting on the ground were proportionally larger.

Replying to the ungracious taunt, frequently uttered, that Christians go to camp meetings for the same purpose for which people in general go to “a pic-nic,” viz., to have a “good social time,” the Secretary in his account of the meeting says:—

“However true it may be that some professing Christians may have attended these meetings for the purposes named, we do not believe, nay, we know it is not the case with the mass; and even if it were so, we would think it by no means an unworthy object, nor time and money misspent, provided the ceremonies were rationally conducted. ‘Tired nature’ occasionally seeks repose from the toil and strife of business.

The ancient Jewish festivals were no less the means of restoring the social and intellectual equilibrium, than of promoting religious sentiment and devotional feeling. Those institutions, like the holy Sabbath, even viewed as mere matters of rational policy, were no less economical in their provisions than sacred in their tendencies. So with our annual gatherings.

“But these benefits, after all, are not to be regarded as the only, nor yet the principal ones. And those professing Christians commit a great, and in some sense an irreparable mistake, who come to spend the week in mere social enjoyments, and thus allow to pass by one of the most important occasions of a whole lifetime for securing permanent and lasting spiritual advantages. This hallowed occasion was, however, otherwise improved — improved for spiritual advancement mostly — by happy hundreds who left the cares of the world at their homes, and came up to this spiritual Jeru-

saalem, this city of tents, to worship, not the leafy canopy which overshadows us, but the Great Builder of this magnificent temple. Nor were such the only ones thus spiritually benefited; many who came with cold, dark and unbelieving hearts, here left their load of guilt, and returned to their houses rejoicing. Quite a number professed to have experienced the blessing of ‘full redemption in the blood of the Lamb,’ while great numbers of others were very much quickened. The number converted, after much care and caution in ascertaining it, was very safely, it was thought, put down at one hundred. Many also were reclaimed, and many professed to be saved from all their sins.”

The Secretary remarks:—

“The site, for the purposes of such a meeting, is still increasingly the admiration of visiting strangers, and we hope it may yet be the spiritual birthplace of thousands of repenting sinners.”

A single individual having been appointed last year a committee of arrangements to make preparations for this meeting, such individual is styled, in the records of this and each succeeding year, the "agent" of the meeting, and not "committee," as those persons have been called, selected heretofore for a similar purpose.

It will be recollected that as the existing lease of these premises was to expire this year, Mr. Coffin was last year authorized to obtain a new lease for the term of ten years. This he had done. By some inadvertence, however, the new lease was made to embrace eleven years instead of ten, so that it does not expire till the year 1861. The yearly rent stipulated was \$30. Mr. C. exercising a sound discretion in the matter, also obtained, on his own responsibility, leases from two other parties, of lands adjacent to the premises heretofore secured, paying only for what was described in the two, annual rents amounting to \$6. The

brethren highly approved of this measure, as by these additional leases the control of the meeting is so extended over the neighboring grounds as to enable us the more effectually to prevent annoyance of any sort in the vicinity of the encampment.

It being thought by many that very considerable improvements ought to be made upon the ground, especially as the meeting was annually growing larger, a committee was appointed to consider and report what improvements should be made. The committee consisted of Preston Bennet, Esq., of Providence, Henry Tobey, of Falmouth, Isaiah D. Pease, of Edgartown, Rev. B. Otheman, Rev. A. U. Swinerton, J. Remington, of Fall River, Rev. R. M. Hatfield, and Henry Walker, of New Bedford.

This committee subsequently reported through Br. Otheman, recommending the entire new seating of the ground, for public worship, on a new and improved plan; also other additional fixtures. The propo-

sition was cordially adopted; and the agent for the year to come, Bro. Sirson P. Coffin, was ordered to place the new seating on cedar spiles.

As the meeting next year was to be held over the Sabbath, every restriction thought needful was imposed in order to preserve the sanctity of that holy day.

The tents were left in care of the agent, after the close of the meeting, as last year.

THE CAMP MEETING OF 1851.

This commenced Aug. 5. Rev. T. Ely again presided. The Secretary, in the beginning of his published report, says:—

“It is again my duty, and a pleasant one, to give some account of a camp meeting held in this delightful and far-famed grove. But to describe adequately a camp meeting, —who can do it, at least to the comprehen-

sion of those who have never seen one, and especially such a one as has just now closed? I confess my own inability, and yet I am convinced that those whose duty it is to give sketches of such scenes are bound to do the best they can towards presenting a correct view.

“Such are the thrilling influences and interests of a camp meeting that it is not uncommon for both preachers and people to feel, while present at one, that *it* is the very best they have ever attended; although, in fact, no such superiority exists. Being vividly impressed by the present, and forgetful of the excellences of the past, the secretary of such meetings would also be very liable to a similar judgment. But still, having attended all the meetings of this kind held in this grove during a period of fifteen years, and having performed the duties of secretary more than half of those years, and now for several years consecutively, I think I may be allowed to express

with some confidence, the opinion that this has really been the best of the series. Indeed, the interest of the meetings here has been annually increasing for several years past. The number of tents was about one hundred, and the congregation on the Sabbath was estimated at from 3,500 to 4000."

Notwithstanding the great numbers present, the usual good order prevailed.

Agreeably to vote of last year, the ground had been newly seated.

A severe storm on Monday the 4th was succeeded by a bright sunshine on the day of commencing.

Bro. Jeremiah Pease, Sen., was reappointed chorister. He was also chosen superintendent of the night watch, with power to appoint any needed number of assistants.

The weather was very fine during most of the time. A full-orbed moon rolling in splendor through the heavens by night, con-

tributed not a little to our convenience and happiness. About the only interruption we experienced to our public services from the weather, occurred on Saturday night. But even this proved a blessing in disguise, as the pealing thunder and the almost constant lightning's glare operated to test our readiness to leave the world instantly, as two fellow mortals had done in a neighboring village during a most dreadful thunder storm but a few days before.

There was preaching during the meeting by the following brethren:—L. Bates, C. S. Hazzard, W. Butler, G. F. Pool, C. L. Eastman, J. D. Butler, W. Cone, Loveland, Atwater, Houghton, Richards, Upham, E. H. Hatfield, Hobart, Patten, Lovejoy, John Bishop, (a Christian Israelite,) Husted, Chase, Goodrich, Burnham and Gifford.

The introductory sermon by Father Bates was well adapted, and was one of his happiest efforts. The Lord was manifestly with his people, while the subject of personal holiness was at this time pressed

home upon them, as it was also in many of the succeeding sermons. During the meeting about forty persons, among whom were five or six preachers, professed to have experienced the blessing thus recommended; besides which, there was a very great and general quickening among believers. Conviction seemed quite to pervade the encampment, and according to information obtained during and at the close of the meeting, about one hundred and thirty-four individuals were converted.

The love-feast and sacramental occasions were among the best. Several persons received the ordinance of baptism.

There were present about sixty ministers of the Gospel, including some of other persuasions.

An interesting incident connected with this meeting was the sound conversion, during its progress, of an aged sea captain in the vicinity, who owned much of the land leased for the convenience of our meetings

here, but who was now upon a sick and dying bed. Heaven, we trust, soon after gave him a better possession in the new Jerusalem.

To facilitate the doings in the business department, a large committee was appointed on the subject of *finance*. This committee subsequently reported, recommending, among other things, the constituting of "a Standing Committee on Finance, to settle all accounts and raise moneys." The recommendation was adopted, and the following five brethren chosen to comprise that Committee, viz: Isaiah D. Pease of Edgartown, Benjamin C. Ward of New Bedford, Abner L. Westgate of Fall River, James Lewis of Providence, and Thomas Bradley of Holmes' Hole. Bro. Bradley was also elected Treasurer of the meeting.

The expense of preparing the ground this year, including that of new seating, and also lighting and other incidentals, was \$260, the whole of which was promptly

raised and paid, besides a surplus of \$19, which the Treasurer was ordered to forward to the Treasurer of the Parent Missionary Society, at New York.

THE CAMP MEETING OF 1852.

This meeting commenced at the time appointed, Wednesday, August 18th.

The Presiding Elders of both the Sandwich and Providence Districts were present, — Rev. Pardon T. Kenney of the former, and Rev. David Patten, Jr., of the latter. Bro. Patten was chosen to preside.

Although we seldom, if ever, have any serious trouble from ill-disposed persons who may visit the encampment, yet we always think it well to adopt measures for the preservation of order, and thus be prepared both to correct the unintentional indiscretions into which well-meaning peo-

ple may occasionally fall, and, by a vigilant reconnoitring, to detect and suppress in its incipency any attempt at wilful violation of our rules. The methods of which we have availed ourselves for the attainment of these objects, have varied, being such, from time to time, as were thought best for the time being. At this meeting a "Committee of Order" was appointed, consisting of Jeremiah Pease, Sen., Benjamin C. Ward, John Nye, Alanson Williston, Abraham Anthony, Charles Weeks, and Preston Bennet.

Rev. F. Upham, by request, presented to the meeting of preachers and tent-masters a code of rules, which, with a single amendment, was adopted, and ordered to be spread upon the journal for preservation.

A movement was again made to hold an additional camp meeting next year somewhere in the State of Rhode Island. A committee was raised to select a place and make the arrangements; the meeting to be held some time after the one here.

The customary appointments of officers were made, and other items of business attended to. Several members of the Finance Committee declining to serve longer, that committee was re-constructed as follows:— Joseph Brownell of New Bedford, Kilborn Smith of Edgartown, Solomon Arnold of Providence, Henry Bradley of Holmes' Hole, and Abner L. Westgate of Fall River. Brother Henry Bradley was chosen Treasurer.

The meeting was still increasing in numbers. New tents were added; there were about one hundred and forty-five in all. There were about sixty ministers present. The names of those who preached were as follows:— George W. Stearns, L. Bates, M. Chase, E. B. Bradford, S. Benton, P. Crandall, W. H. Stetson, M. J. Talbot, H. H. Smith, R. McGonegal, W. T. Harlow, Dr. Wentworth, (formerly Professor in Carlisle College, Pa., now missionary to China,) A. McKeown, J. D. Butler, R. Live-

sey, H. W. Houghton, F. Upham, S. C. Brown, J. Lovejoy, G. W. Winchester, J. E. Gifford. The sermon by Dr. Wentworth will be long remembered.

As day after day passed on, and one public exercise succeeded another, the meeting was constantly increasing in interest. We do not pretend, as some do, that *stillness* in meetings, or in revivals, is a *virtue*. At any rate the fact was not sought to be disguised that this camp meeting was not of that character. There *was* noise. It was not, however, the occasional dash from the overhanging clouds, accompanied by the momentary discharge of heaven's artillery; it was rather the steady increasing rain. It was not the crash and roar of the cataract, but the calm, deep flow of the river, gathering strength from its tributaries, and thus wending its way on in majesty to its ocean terminus. It was, indeed, the sweet gushing utterance of praise from lips of Christian men and women

whose hearts were imbued with a deep and abiding sense of the great love and mercy of God manifested in their redemption.

The Secretary of the meeting, speaking of the sentiment so often expressed concerning the various camp meetings in this series, viz., that the present one is always superior to its predecessors, defends the position taken, and says that each one ought to be thus, and, in the nature of things, is so. "It is indeed," he asserts, "what we are bound to labor for and to expect. The cause of Christ universally is onward; and why should there not be a continually increasing power in the means used to carry it forward to its final triumphs? *Progress* is a law of universal nature. Both vegetable and animal rise from almost unobservable incipency to the strength of maturity by this law. The human intellect, also, which in infancy seems scarcely perceptible in a degree above that possessed by the dumb species,

by the same law grows and strengthens indefinitely. Such, also, is the progress of the moral man, whether in the ascending or descending scale with respect to purity and goodness. And so, likewise, with regard to the developments of science and the * * * enterprises of trade, commerce, &c. Who will therefore say that the same law should not hold good in relation to an annual gathering of Christian men for spiritual improvement, and for the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom? Such, we believe, at any rate, is the case in the present instance. The testimony of all whom I have heard express any opinion upon the subject, goes to establish the fact that this is the best meeting ever held here."

The number of conversions at this meeting was estimated at one hundred and forty.

THE CAMP MEETING OF 1853.

This, as appointed, commenced Aug. 10th. Rev. D. Patten, Jr., Presiding Elder of the Providence District, was again chosen to preside.

While the natural beauties of the place suffer little or no diminution, it is becoming from year to year more extensively occupied. We had this year about one hundred and sixty tents, of different descriptions, and never did our snow-white city look more enchanting.

The right spirit prevailed throughout — the spirit of love, harmony, earnestness, labor. And God owned and blessed our feeble endeavors. There certainly was a great quickening among the members of our Israel; backsliders were reclaimed, and more than eighty souls were brought from darkness to light, and from the power of sin and Satan unto God. To His great name be all the glory.

Some fifty preachers were present more or less of the time, the following of whom preached during the meeting in the order in which they are named: — G. W. Stearns, C. H. Titus, C. Hammond, E. Benton, J. B. Gould, Jas. Mather, J. Lovejoy, R. Donkersley, Robt. McGonnegal, W. H. Stetson, J. Howson, J. Hobart, R. Livesey, W. R. Bagnall, of the N. E. Conference, Bro. Bancroft, lately transferred to the Providence Conference from the N. Y. Conference, A. McKcown, L. Bates, F. Upham, and N. Bemis. The ability and faithfulness of the sermons preached at this time by these brethren, would not suffer in the comparison with those of any former year. The public prayer meetings were scenes of great power and victory. The love-feast on Sabbath morning was a love-feast indeed, and the sacramental occasion on Monday morning was one of peculiar solemnity and impressiveness.

The size of the congregation denoted a

considerable advance of any former year. The Secretary of the meeting estimated it to be, on the Sabbath, four thousand people. An editor of the *New York Express*, it was said, computed it at five thousand. Either computation will not be deemed extravagant when it is remarked that the capacious steamer *Canonicus* made two trips from Providence and way places down to the ground, bringing large numbers from those localities; and that the various means of conveyance were put in requisition on a similarly large scale from other sections represented here.

We experienced but very little annoyance from any source. It is true that a few of the baser sort occasionally gave some slight intimations that the old man still lived, and in a few instances, in the evening, *Sibboleth* was heard shouted in the distance; but with these few exceptions the customary good order prevailed, and we could most cordially accord to the crowds of visitors upon the ground generally, that

gentlemanly bearing and Christian decorum which became the place where we were assembled.

Among the friends present from a distance were Doctor Walter C. Palmer and his excellent wife, Mrs. Phebe Palmer, the authoress whose praise is in all the churches, from New York. The well-known philanthropist, Dea. Moses Grant, of Boston, was among the visitors.

Notwithstanding it is so generally known that a strict supervision is exercised here, and that groups of evil-minded strangers who may come and take up quarters in the neighboring woods, to revel with their bottles, are very likely to be detected, or to have their hidden treasures found and *cared for*, still some do, occasionally, try to see how well they can elude the vigilance of officers of the meeting. At this time, some fifteen bottles, well filled, were found snugly nested in the woods, and on the morning of the close were brought out and disposed of according to their demerits.

The committee appointed last year with reference to the holding of another camp meeting in the State of Rhode Island, had made no arrangements for one, and consequently no such meeting was held.

At this meeting, Bro. Sylvanus L. Pease, Rev. Robert McGonnegal, and Rev. John Hobart, were chosen a committee to take charge of the public singing.

The rules and regulations adopted for the government of this meeting were nearly the same as those of last year. As it was desirable that the thousands of people now annually coming upon the ground should have every facility for knowing readily what were the regulations by which they were to be governed while here, and believing those adopted at this meeting were such, in substance, as would be likely to be permanent, the Secretary was directed to have five hundred copies of the same printed for distribution in the encampment at future meetings. This he accordingly did; post-

ing up, and otherwise distributing large numbers of them at the next and each succeeding camp meeting held here,—the business meetings from year to year re-adopting them with much unanimity.

The Secretary's report of this camp meeting says:—

“Instead of being tired of the scene in less than one short week, many of us who staid till the close felt more like remaining *another* week than we had done like continuing through the first.”

The following is the closing paragraph:

“Notwithstanding the good accommodations we already have upon the ground, still further improvements are voted to be made by the agent for another year. May the Lord still own and bless these extra means of grace. Jesus does receive sinners still.”

THE MEETING OF 1854.

This was presided over by Rev. Pardon T. Kenney, Presiding Elder of Sandwich District. It was no less interesting than its predecessors. The numbers in attendance showed some increase from last year. From the most accurate calculation that could, under the circumstances, be made, it appeared that there were about five hundred more present on the Sabbath, (when the congregation is usually the largest,) than on the same day at the meeting a year ago.

The weather, for the most of the time, was favorable. Our public meetings at the stand were, however, interrupted two or three times by the rain.

We had able and faithful sermons. The subject of entire consecration received a large share of attention from the preachers, and the good results of the efforts made

on this subject were apparent. Mrs. Palmer, who is deeply interested in this subject, was again present with us and spoke upon it, giving a lucid testimony of her own experience, and pointing out the way of faith to others.

Another topic much dwelt upon at this meeting, in the sermons and exhortations, was the importance of *thoroughness* in the instructions given, and other steps preparatory to conversion, in order that professed conversions may be real ones, and thus be the more likely to secure a continued Christian life.

The names of those who preached are not given at large in the published report of this year. There were present during the meeting about sixty ministers, including several of other denominations, and also including several members of other Conferences. Among these were brethren B. W. Gorham of the Wyoming Conference, Samuel Norris from the New Hampshire,

and R. W. Allen and H. V. Degen from the New England. These dear brethren all had our thanks for their presence and labors with us. Without intending any invidious comparisons, we would say that the labors of Bro. Gorham, above named, added greatly to the interest of this meeting. He preached two able sermons, in which the ploughshare of truth was driven deep. He labored much otherwise.

The exact number of conversions could not be ascertained. It must have been large, although probably not quite as large as at a few of the last meetings. It was believed, however, that in one of the tents, where there was a great deal of untiring and earnest labor to bring sinners to Christ, twenty persons were the subjects of converting grace.

The printed account of the meeting states: —

“ The area of the circle has been somewhat enlarged this year by the removal

back of some eight or ten of the large tents, and arrangements have been made for a still further extension next year. There are now some thirty-six large tents in the main circle, and application has already been made to the agent for places for three more next year, and also for six family tents in the rear. This last class have increased greatly of late, insomuch that the whole number of tents on the ground, including these, the boarding tents, &c., amounted this year to one hundred and eighty. Really we look like quite a city in the woods. We think we are already unequalled in this particular, as well as in eligibility of location, by any other encampment in New England. If strangers doubt, let them come and see. I think their doubts will be soon dissipated, as those of many others have been. Still we are increasing from year to year."

Although the meeting was large, yet by the promptness and energy of our excellent

President, and the untiring attentions of the Vigilance Committee, very good order was maintained.

The conclusion of the report is as follows:—

“We trust that the good results of this meeting upon sinners, backsliders, believers, and all interested, will long be felt, and that the plain, old-fashioned, pungent, Bible truths to which we have here listened, and the importunate prayers of faith here offered up, may tell powerfully for good upon all represented here.”

As both this camp meeting and the one held at Eastham are within the bounds of the Sandwich District, and as it had been the practice at Eastham, long since adopted, for the Presiding Elders of the Boston and Sandwich Districts to have the charge of that meeting in alternate years; and as the two meetings are held usually at or near the same time—making it inconvenient for the same person to attend both—and as,

moreover, it had become a custom to hold the District Steward's meeting there at the time of the camp meeting, the Presiding Elder of the Sandwich District had generally attended that meeting. Hence it had almost always devolved upon the Presiding Elder of the New Bedford (now Providence) District to preside at the meetings on the Vineyard. Some of the brethren desiring an arrangement here similar to that at Eastham, it was, at one of our business meetings this year, on motion of Rev. William T. Harlow, voted, "That it is the sense of this meeting, that hereafter the two Presiding Elders of the Providence and Sandwich Districts should preside alternately at the camp meetings held in this grove." Although a compliance with this vote imposes upon the Sandwich District Elder the work of presiding every year at one or the other meeting, yet he has cheerfully consented to do so, and all has gone on harmoniously as before.

The Vigilance Committee this year were: George W. Smith, A. Vincent, R. Topham, S. L. Pease, H. Tobey, A. Ferris, H. Bradley, and ——— Gibbs.

Capt. Lawton and Dr. Stevens, both of Providence, were appointed to lead the singing at the stand.

A vote was passed requiring that the Vigilance Committee of next year enforce the law of the Commonwealth against the hawking and peddling of goods and wares at camp meetings, and that they do so with especial reference to the sale of books.

While, as had been apparent, our brethren assembling here from year to year had shown a Christian liberality with regard both to the established religious enterprises of the church, and the occasional objects of benevolence and charity, yet, as by the knowledge of this fact many individuals who have no very special claims upon our purses have come to think that the great gathering at the camp meeting is

a very good place to enlist sympathy and to collect a few dollars for some special purpose, and the meeting had thus sometimes been quite annoyed by applications of the kind, the following resolutions, moved by Bro. Harlow, were severally adopted:

“1. That we will give no countenance to any person coming to this camp meeting to solicit money for any object whatever, foreign to the design of the meeting.

“2. That we request the next year's preachers' [and tent masters'] meeting to instruct its committee of vigilance to prevent the operations of any such person or persons, should they visit the ground for any such purpose.”

It was voted so to enlarge the main circle as to admit two more tents in the same.

THE MEETING OF 1855.

This meeting commenced August 21st, and closed on the 28th. "Wesleyan Grove" was again vocal with prayer and praise. During most of the time the weather was fine. In a few instances public service at the stand was prevented by the wet. The people came prepared for, and evidently expecting, rational entertainment. Nor were they disappointed. Take it all in all the preaching was probably never better in this encampment.

There were about fifty preachers present. The names of those who preached on the occasion are not given in the published report, with the exception of that of a distinguished stranger. That stranger was Dr. Roberts, of Baltimore. The fact that his father was one of the pioneers of Methodism in some parts of New England, as well as the Middle States, rendered his per-

son the more beloved and his labors among us the more interesting. But whoever the preacher might be, such sermons and exhortations as were delivered by this model Christian preacher can hardly be too highly appreciated. He carried us about on Zion, showed us her old foundations, her landmarks, her bulwarks, her towers, and other means of defence. He spoke to us of "growing in grace," and of living up to the high privileges afforded us under the "ministration of life." He preached two sermons full of instruction and energy. On Sabbath morning he followed Bro. White, of Providence, who had been discoursing on the subject of Christian holiness, in a most powerful and warm-hearted exhortation on the same subject. He not only regarded the doctrine as fundamental in theology, but he considered Christian holiness as forming the only sure basis of real prosperity in the church and in the nation. It was, therefore, our

duty no less as citizens than as members of the church, to be holy. His remarks were somewhat extended, and notwithstanding the dinner hour arrived and had passed, the mass of living beings still waited contentedly to listen, enchained by the Christian eloquence of this truly great and good man.

Our city of tents now numbered about 200, of all descriptions; some of those newly erected were on a magnificent scale. The facilities for conveyance to the ground exceeded those of any previous year. Besides other means, two steamboats, the "Metacomet," and "Eagle's Wing," made daily trips, Sunday excepted, and the last named even came on that day. A moderate estimate is, that there were between five and six thousand people on the ground on the Sabbath; some rated the number as high as seven thousand. Of course it might well be expected that where there were so many, there would be some of

“the baser sort.” And thus it proved. Rum-mies, and thieves, and others, made us some trouble; but the disgrace of those who commit gross sin of any name here belongs to the actors themselves; it cannot rightfully attach to the meeting. It is as true now as it was in the days of Job, and as impossible entirely to prevent it, that where the children of God assemble together, Satan comes also. Considering, however, the great number congregated, and the variety of character, excellent order was preserved; and for this we were mostly indebted to the prompt and energetic manner in which the chairman of the meeting, our highly esteemed Bro. Charles H. Titus, Presiding Elder on Providence District, presided, and to the constant wakefulness of our Committee of Vigilance. As an additional security for good order, our business meeting made arrangements for a legally organized police for the meeting the following year.

The number of conversions was not reported. It was quite large, however. The other usual good results were experienced by the churches. The love-feast and communion service were, as they customarily are at camp meetings, memorable seasons.

Our Vigilance Committee this year were Jeremiah Pease, Jr., George W. Smith, Elisha Gibbs, Alanson Williston, A. L. Westgate, P. M. Stone, Iram Smith, N. B. Hall, and F. W. Bent.

The Finance Committee chosen for the year to come were Abner L. Westgate, Preston Bennet, Alanson Williston, Kilborn Smith, and Henry Bradley. The last named was again Treasurer.

The agent of the camp meeting, Bro. Sirson P. Coffin, as was his custom, submitted his annual report, which was acted upon. He was appointed for another year.

After fixing on the particular day of the

week on which the meeting next year should begin and close, and the month in which it should be held, the particular time in the month was left to be decided, as it frequently had been, by the two Presiding Elders of Providence and Sandwich Districts.

The subject of the purchase of this ground by members of this camp meeting had been conversed upon from time to time. Last year the Finance Committee were directed to ascertain for what sum the premises here occupied could be had. They now reported the result of their inquiries. Such were the terms named by the proprietors that the Committee recommended not to purchase. Their report was adopted.

Considerable annoyance having sometimes been experienced from carriages coming within the circle of tents when not strictly necessary, the business meeting passed an order prohibiting carriages and

carts from approaching nearer the circle than a given point, which was named, except to bring on baggage, or to take or leave passengers who might be sick, or in case of stormy weather; and interdicting their coming within that circle at all, *for any purpose whatever*, during the time of public service at the stand.

FAMILY TENTS.

Formerly, here as at other camp meetings, each company of brethren and friends coming together, lived, lodged, and held their prayer meetings in one large tent, owned by them or by the church they represented. But after a few years, some few brethren, wishing to be more domestic in their household affairs, and to enjoy an undisturbed retreat from the crowd, at least a part of the time, conceived the idea of having separate small family tents, near by, for the objects named; while they would still consider themselves as belong-

ing to the large tent's company, and would go in to enjoy the social means of grace with the mass of their brethren. Very soon others adopted the same style of camp meeting life. From year to year the number has since been increasing, till now some of the large tents seem at times half forsaken. Of the two hundred tents on the ground this year, about one hundred and fifty were of this description. It has been found that although these small tents afford many temporal comforts which could not otherwise be enjoyed here, yet they are calculated to keep a great many away from the preaching and prayer meetings on the ground; and, without some wholesome regulations regarding them, such as have been of late adopted, the custom of having them is liable to be abused by irreligious persons, to the injury of the camp meetings themselves. It was therefore at this meeting voted, "That no one hereafter be allowed to have a family tent on this ground, unless he be ap-

proved as a suitable person to do so, by the church in his vicinity, he being a member or not, as the case may be." It was also, on motion, voted, "That each small tent shall hereafter have on it the *name* of the owner, and the *name of the church* recommending him; and that every such tent be under the supervision of the tent-master of the society or company approving it."

The two Presiding Elders were requested to consult the societies on their respective districts, as to whether they would prefer to have the camp meetings held here, to be held between Sabbaths.

THE MEETING OF 1856.

This meeting commenced Aug. 14th. Rev. Paul Townsend, Presiding Elder of Sandwich District, whose turn it was to pre-

side, being absent, Rev. Charles H. Titus, Presiding Elder of Providence District, was chosen to fill his place; which he did most faithfully and efficiently. We had another great and good meeting.

On the first evening, instead of a set sermon, we had several short, appropriate addresses from some of the senior preachers. The following named brethren preached at the stand during the meeting, viz: Moses Chase, John F. Wright, of Ohio, (late Book Agent at Cincinnati, and now agent for the Colored People's College) Charles Paine, M. J. Talbot, F. Upham, R. McGonegal, Stephen Cushing, of the N. E. Conference, William Livesey, John N. Coombs, of Alexandria, D. C., member of the Baltimore Conference, Ralph W. Allen, of the N. E. Conference, J. Cooper, Wm. Leonard, H. C. Atwater, J. Howson, and Samuel W. Upham. Wednesday, the last day, being stormy, there was preaching in several of the tents. The steamers "Eagle's Wing" and

“S. A. Stevens” were plying between New Bedford and this locality, one or both nearly every day of the meeting, and the “*Canonicus*” brought our friends from Providence and some of the way places. Many other people came by other conveyances. Several new tents, both large and small, were erected this year. By as strict an estimate as the circumstances would allow, the number present on the Sabbath could not be put down at less than between five and six thousand.

The names of the preachers given above are sufficient to guarantee that we had good sermons. Many of them were excellent; the subjects were uniformly well-chosen. The sermon of Bro. Coombs was a masterly exposition and application of divine truth. And those of Father Wright, (for in addition to his sermon on the stand, he preached twice in tents on Wednesday,) were able, thorough, and filled with evangelic fire — just such as we might have expected

from one of the apostles of Methodism in the West. Some of the public prayer meetings were very powerful, and the tent meetings generally were earnest and effectual. Ministers and members were much quickened, the thoughtless awakened, and, in the judgment of a chastened charity, one hundred sinners were converted. 'Jesus receiveth sinners still.'

The rule adopted a year or two since restricting the collection of money on this ground for any objects other than those connected with the camp meeting, was suspended for the presentation of a single case. This was the one represented by Father Wright, the Colored People's College, in Ohio. He had permission to present its claims for aid to the public congregation, and one hundred dollars were collected to further the worthy objects of this Institution.

There were present at this meeting about seventy different ministers ; — several more than ever before.

Although we had some stormy weather during the meeting, it was pleasant again at the time of the close, which was favorable for our return home.

Agreeably to the vote of last year, a Chief of Police was employed to preserve order, instead of a Vigilance Committee. Mr. Daniel C. Pease of Edgartown was the gentleman retained for the purpose. He performed his duties very satisfactorily. But the brethren voted to dispense with such an officer for the next year, on account of the additional expense. There was this year no disturbance whatever during the meeting: and there usually is but little, if any.

This year, for the first time, a tax of fifty cents was ordered for each tent, large and small, to aid in defraying the expense of the meeting.

It will be recollected that it is one of the rules always adopted at camp meetings, that "a light shall be kept burning in each

tent all night." It was probably because some of our friends had, like the foolish virgins, for want of a little forecast, suffered their lamps to go out, that the brethren of the business meeting thought the following *emphatic* vote called for: "*Voted, That each tent, without exception, have a light kept burning all night.*" It was also voted, "That the use of burning fluid be entirely forbidden on the ground."

The subject of looking out a new site for future meetings was again discussed. One of the reasons for this probably was, that some of the top branches of these venerable oaks had died, and the shade afforded to the worshippers was not quite as good as formerly. It was not a defect, however, which could not be remedied, and the recent agent had already caused a few young shade trees to be set out in the most exposed places, at his own expense.

On motion of Bro. John C. Scott, of Millville, it was voted, "That a committee

of laymen be chosen, one from each church here represented, who, in connection with the preachers in charge, shall constitute a Committee of Arrangements, to meet in New Bedford, on ——— day of ———, to take into consideration the whole matter of public victualling tents on the camp ground, and to have full power to adopt, and cause to be carried into effect, such arrangements as shall, in their judgment, be conducive to the best interests of our annual camp meeting." This large committee was accordingly appointed. And to them were also committed the consideration of all matters having regard to the expenses of the camp meetings, and the making of inquiry with regard to the best place for holding future meetings. The appointing of an agent for another year, was also assigned to them; and they subsequently made choice of Bro. Alphonzo Smith, of Holmes' Hole, for that arduous and responsible position.

THE CAMP MEETING OF 1857.

This our annual feast commenced on the 20th of August, and closed on the morning of the 27th.

Whatever may be the inconveniences attending our connection with a camp meeting, one thing is always very desirable, viz., good weather to go and return. In this respect we could not well be more highly favored than at this meeting. The same munificent Hand that was thus kind, also gave us a plentiful rain on Saturday and Sunday nights. Rain is always a blessing to a camp meeting in some one or more ways. In this instance a good Providence was apparent, not only in the rain, but in the storm of wind which accompanied it on Saturday night.

Many of our friends were on the ground this year quite in advance of the time of beginning. About one hundred and fifty

tents were covered before the evening of the day preceding, and it was estimated that about three hundred persons lodged in the grove that night. There were about two hundred and fifty tents of all kinds during the meeting. It was delightful merely to behold this city of tents, the white coverings beautifully contrasting with the green foliage so gorgeously overshadowing them. But it was better still to mingle with the population of this sequestered city, to listen to the word of the Lord preached by his faithful heralds for six successive days, and to join in the prayers offered and the praises sung by the assembled multitude of devoted Christians, and here to battle for the right and for the salvation of our fellow-men.

Some sixty ministers of the Gospel were present during the meeting, a goodly number of whom proclaimed "the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God." Those who thus stood be-

tween the living and the dead, either at the stand or in some of the larger tents when the seats were wet, were Bros. McKinstry, H. H. Smith, R. Donkersley, B. Otheman, J. W. Willet, J. E. Gifford, A. Latham, Wm. Leonard, Wm. H. Richards, J. Cooper, M. Chase, J. Allen, J. W. Dadmun, John Lovejoy, H. S. White, A. McKeown, — Morrison, J. B. Gould, James D. Butler, Henry Baylies, S. C. Brown, — Carroll. Many others performed important parts in the public services. Among these we note particularly the Rev. Mr. Girdwood, pastor of the Williams Street Baptist Church, New Bedford, who was present on the Sabbath, and made a very excellent and well-timed address after one of the sermons; and also Father Bates, whose venerable form, successful ministry, happy soul, and touches of true native eloquence uttered on this occasion, were such as to invest with a lively interest every word uttered by him.

The people came in crowds this year. Six thousand was thought to be a moderate calculation for the numbers in and about the grove on the Sabbath.

Rev. Paul Townsend, Presiding Elder of the Sandwich District, although he had just gone through a similar scene of care and toil at Eastham, presided at this meeting with great efficiency, energy and effect.

The public singing was conducted by Bros. Lawton of Providence, and Scott of Millville. The entire control of the altar was voted to the choristers during preaching hours, for the better conducting of this exercise of praise. In addition, the president, by request of the brethren, extended the invitation to the whole congregation to unite in this delightful part of public worship.

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered on Monday morning, at eight o'clock, and our camp meeting love-feast was held on Tuesday morning, at which one

hundred and fifteen spoke in the space of one hour and a half.

The number converted during the meeting, as I ascertained by personal inquiry at the large tents, was fifty. One of these converts was a young Jew, from Bridgewater, an intelligent-looking person, who spoke several times to the admiration of those who heard him. It is well known that such is the opposition of the real Jew to the blessed Jesus, that he despises the very name. Hence it was interesting to hear this young convert say with emphasis, "I used to *hate* Jesus, now I *love* Jesus." And he further manifested the love he now bore to that sacred name by being baptized in it with water before leaving the ground, — a good example for even Gentile converts to follow.

Among the converts were also several other young men of promise.

In addition to this result of the meeting, the other usual benefits were realized, the

reclaiming of many a poor wanderer, and the quickening of a host of believers, and the entire consecration of some. But although we had excellent preaching for the most part — some of it superior — affording a good variety both of matter and manner, and although there was much of the good spirit among us, especially at the last meeting, and although it was a very excellent meeting, quiet and peaceful, yet there did not seem to be quite so thorough a breaking down, if I may say so, as at some of the meetings held here. I must repeat here, that I think one of the great errors of late is, making the recreation, rustication and sociality of the occasion too great an object relatively. As an evidence of the tendency to this it may be remarked some fancy names have been adopted here for some of the locations, such as “Prairie,” “Upham’s Hill,” “Fourth Street Avenue,” &c. But as a matter of mere entertainment, some of us were far more interested

in a relic of the past, which was the initials of sundry persons, imprinted in the bark of one of the venerable oaks standing in the area. I might not allude to it here, but for the initials of one name there inscribed. Many will not be at a loss to supply what is lacking of the name, when I tell them the letters were "S. W. W." Although the excellent man who many years since made the inscription with his own hand, died recently in the bosom of another branch of the Christian church, yet there are many thousands in the church of his early choice, in whose memory the name of Shipley W. Wilson is still fragrant.

An incident worthy of note at this meeting was the presentation, for the use of the stand, of a good Bible, by David Collins, Esq., of Brighton, Mass.

The meeting testified their affection for Father Bates, a superannuated veteran itinerant, by voting to pay any expense he might have incurred on the ground this year.

Sirson P. Coffin, Esq., was appointed agent of the meeting for next year.

It was voted that hereafter the agent of this camp meeting, whoever he may be, be a member of the business meeting; and also that all officers and committees, appointed by the preachers' and tent-masters' meeting, be constituted members of the same.

It will be recollected that at the meeting last year some measures were adopted with a view to a change of location for this meeting. The committee then appointed now reported that they had made some inquiries in relation to other sites, but that they had come to no final conclusion. Inasmuch as the foliage on some of the old oaks in the area had become so diminished as to require the replenishing of the grove by setting out some young shade trees, in case the meeting is to continue here many years longer, it was thought best to ascertain on what conditions these premises

could be had, to take effect after the expiration of the present lease. It appeared that these grounds were understood to have changed hands since our meeting last year. On inquiry it was found that the purchaser placed so high a value upon them that it would not be wise either to buy or hire them of him at his rates; whereupon a committee was authorized to make a selection of a place during the year for future occupancy. It was also proposed to attempt to obtain an act of incorporation for our meeting.

The Finance Committee chosen for the following year were Abner L. Westgate, Preston Bennet, Henry Bradley, Caleb L. Ellis, and Philip Reynolds. Bro. Bradley was reappointed treasurer of the camp meeting.

The following vote was passed.

“ On motion, Voted, that no person be allowed to have a small or family tent on this ground without a certificate from the preacher in charge, by authority of the church, (or the official members of

the same,) with which he holds connection, either as a member, or as belonging to the congregation ; each such tent to have placed upon it the name of the person so licensed, together with the name of the church or place from which he comes thus recommended ; that all such certificates be presented to the agent of the meeting, upon the arrival on the ground of the persons holding them ; that the respective tent-masters of the large or companies' tents, shall have the oversight of all such small tents, the owners or occupants of which are connected with the church or congregation represented by their respective tents' company ; and that this be one of the standing rules of the camp meeting held here.

THE CAMP MEETING OF 1858.

It was understood last year, as will be recollected, that the premises within which this camp meeting is annually held, had been sold to a gentleman who placed upon them so high a value that the brethren official could not consent either to purchase or to hire at the prices demanded; and that therefore a committee was then appointed to make selection of some new site, to be secured as a permanent place for holding future meetings. This committee had not proceeded far in their assigned duties, when it was ascertained that the circumstances connected with the sale of this ground, and the pecuniary considerations involved, were such as would affect injuriously all the parties concerned, should this meeting be removed. They therefore undertook to effect such an arrangement and compromise as was judged to be best

both for the parties to the sale and the meeting itself. After a full presentation to the parties of the questions and interests at stake, the property was reconveyed without any considerable detriment to either; and a new lease was then secured for the term of ten years, commencing with the termination of the present one in 1861, with the privilege of having the premises longer by lease, if desired, or by purchase at the market value, if they are at any time to be sold. This new lease was taken of Stephen H. and Harriet Bradley, the present owners, by Sirson P. Coffin of Edgartown, Preston Bennet and William Lawton of Providence, Abner L. Westgate of Fall River, and Henry Walker of New Bedford. Having thus secured the place for thirteen years to come, with the further provisions named, the meeting have now every confidence and security in proceeding to make all such improvements on the grounds as may seem to them desirable and needful.

At one of the business meetings held at this camp meeting, the committee made a report of their doings, submitting also the lease procured, both of which were unanimously and cordially accepted and adopted. Thus the good providence of God so overruled in this instance, as it evidently has done at several previous times referred to in the course of these sketches, that this camp meeting, held as we trust it is from year to year for the glory of His great name and the good of souls, is not only increasing in interest, but is becoming more and more permanently established in this location. And on the other hand, it may be added, the fact of its having become thus established conduces greatly to increase the numbers attending, and otherwise to add to its interest. This, as we shall have occasion to see, has been most manifestly the case the present year.

This camp meeting was appointed to commence August the 17th. For many

weeks before the time appointed, preliminary arrangements were being made. Not only was our indefatigable agent busy with his employees in clearing the ground and making all necessary preparations for the comfort and convenience of the people about to assemble, but great numbers who were intending to come were having their tents built and other arrangements projected. The fact having been made public that these grounds had been secured for many years to come, a very large number, both of ministers and laymen, either had new family tents erected, or old ones essentially repaired. Several new large tents were also placed in the circle in the stead of less commodious ones. Indeed, some of the friends have had erected more enduring houses built of wood. And it has now become quite common to construct the sides of the upright of wood, and in some cases portions of the ends, also, and the other parts of cloth.

Quite a number of persons came and took up their temporary residence in the grove several days before the time announced for commencing, which was Tuesday; so that on the Sabbath preceding quite a little company was gathered into one of the large tents, and a brother in the ministry present preached to them. A meeting was also held on Monday evening, and another on Tuesday afternoon.

The weather for two or three weeks previous to the beginning of our meeting had been, for the most part, rainy, and was so even up to the first day; but subsequently it was favorable, so that public preaching at the stand was not once prevented or interrupted.

The first regular public meeting at the stand was on Tuesday evening. The sermon was on the subject of regarding iniquity in the heart, and the consequences of so doing. Text, Psalm lxvi. 18. The preacher was Rev. B. W. Gorham, of

the Wyoming Conference. In this effort Bro. Gorham fully sustained the high estimate formed of him when he was with us at one of our camp meetings a few years since. This opening exercise was truly a success.

On Wednesday morning the business meeting was organized. Rev. Paul Townsend, Presiding Elder of the Sandwich District, was chosen President of the camp meeting, and Rev. Charles H. Titus, Presiding Elder of the Providence District, his assistant. H. Vincent was reappointed Secretary, and Rev. William H. Richards selected to furnish an account of the meeting for publication in *Zion's Herald and Wesleyan Journal*.

The people came to the meeting in crowds. The steamer "Eagle's Wing" commenced her trips from New Bedford on Monday, and continued them up to the following Saturday, for the most part twice a day, bringing several times from eight hun-

dred to twelve hundred passengers. Usually, of late years, a boat has come down from Providence and other places on the Narraganset. This year our friends from those sections came, at reduced fare, on the railroads to New Bedford, and thence on the "Eagle's Wing." It was therefore harvest time with this steamer. She made three return trips on the following Monday, two on Tuesday, and finished up by taking off a small company who remained on the ground till Wednesday morning. On Sabbath, the steamer "Island Home" came on an excursion from Nantucket and Hyannis, bringing some nine hundred people. Besides the thousands by these boats, great numbers came in steam and sail vessels of less size, from the south side of the Cape and elsewhere. The people of the Island also came out in great numbers. And it is due to our estimable friend, A. D. Hatch, Esq., of the *Boston and New Bedford Express*, to say that he did much, by

advertisements and otherwise, to induce persons to attend from Boston and elsewhere.

It was estimated that on Friday there were six thousand people present,—the number judged to be in attendance last year on the Sabbath. And on the Sabbath of this meeting, by the most careful reckonings, the number present is by the best judges put down at twelve thousand; some six or seven thousand of whom were within the sound of the preacher's voice.

Notwithstanding the great numbers present, the very best of order was preserved. This was frequently remarked by visitors. Although the official brethren had taken every needful precaution, yet there was very little occasion for even an admonition. The masses who came appeared to be not only of high respectability, but also so imbued, if not with Christian grace, yet with religious reverence and a deep sense of the sanctity of the place, that their appear-

ance was the subject of admiration. It would indeed be natural to expect that in such a concourse of people there would be some of wicked propensities. Doubtless there were. Probably the consciousness that in Wesleyan Grove we have every facility, both from the resources of nature and from the civil arm, to maintain the integrity of the meeting intact, and more than all, the conviction that the All-Seeing Eye was upon them, held in check any who might otherwise have been ill-disposed.

Unquestionably the great religious awakening which has pervaded the country the past year has been the procuring cause of the attendance of some thousands more at this time than would otherwise have presented themselves at our yearly "feast of tabernacles." And it was a peculiarly gratifying feature of this meeting, that very many of different denominations of Christians, following out the spirit of union which has been so marked a feature of the

late great revival, have come and participated in the devotions here, and are warm in their praise of the beautiful grove, and in their approbation of this religious gathering as a great and auspicious occasion for the promotion of the cause of revealed religion.

It may not be inappropriate to state that quite a number of distinguished persons, from several different States, were present for a longer or shorter portion of the time, during this meeting. Among them were His Excellency Governor Banks, and his Aid, Mr. Lincoln; Hon. Samuel H. Walley, Hon. Joseph White, and Hon. J. F. Marsh, Bank Commissioners, — all of Massachusetts; Ex-Governor Harris, of Rhode Island; Hon. Mr. Benson, late M. C. from Maine, and Hon. Mr. Barrot of the same State; and Rev. and Hon. Sidney Dean, M. C. from Connecticut, who preached on Sabbath forenoon one of the most able and eloquent sermons ever delivered on this

ground, on "The Elements of Power in the Gospel of Christ."

There were present, either for a part or the whole of the time of this meeting, over one hundred ministers of the Gospel — mostly of the Methodist, but quite a number of other denominations. The greater part were of the Providence Conference. There were about twenty from Boston and vicinity, among whom were some of the leading men of the New England Conference, several of whom preached. There were a few present from other Conferences. The most distinguished of the clergymen present of other persuasions, was the Rev. Thomas Brainard, D. D., a prominent Presbyterian minister of Philadelphia. He followed the preacher of Saturday afternoon, in an address of some length, and of great excellence. There were several colored preachers in attendance, among whom was the much-talked-of Mr. Henson, said to be the veritable "Uncle Tom" of

Mrs. Stowe's book. He on one occasion exhorted from the stand with much effect, relating incidents of his early life, and facts in his Christian experience.

The following are the names of those who preached from the stand, in the order in which their sermons were delivered, viz: B. W. Gorham, T. Willard Lewis, L. C. McCurdy, J. D. Butler, Isaac S. Cushman, S. W. Coggeshall, L. R. Thayer, — Ford, of New Haven, G. F. Cox, J. W. Willet, J. T. Benton, E. H. Hatfield, J. B. Gould, Sidney Dean, Wm. Livesey, George W. Quereau, E. B. Bradford, Wm. Leonard, and Samuel Fox. The sermons of these brethren were all good, some of them of superior excellence. All were sound in theology. Some of them were of the practical, pointed, old Methodistic stamp; but many others, it was thought by some, lacked that directness of aim so important, especially on a camp ground, to arouse the dormant energies of sluggish professors, and to

carry conviction and alarm to the hearts of the unconverted. It was probably owing, in part, to this last-named feature of the preaching, but perhaps more especially to the prevailing inclination, manifest among all classes, to social and domestic enjoyment, that the meeting, although exceedingly pleasant and harmonious, was considered to be less spiritual than usual. There were, however, many good, earnest, profitable exercises, especially in the tent prayer meetings. Also, near the close, some of the public prayer meetings at the stand were powerful, and were crowned by conversions. The love-feast on Sabbath morning was not only the largest in point of numbers ever held here, but was also of unsurpassed spiritual interest. There were one hundred and twenty-six testimonies.

On Monday the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered to many hundreds in the morning, and the ordinance of baptism performed in the evening. On the

whole, this camp meeting, although partaking relatively rather too much of the social character, and too little of deep, earnest, and persistent labor for the conversion of sinners and the consecration of believers, has been profitable, and has had the effect to strengthen and extend its own previously good reputation. About twenty persons have been converted.

The number present on the great day of the meeting, the Sabbath, was, as will have been observed, from four to six thousand more than at any previous meeting held here. There were about seventy more tents than last year, making the whole number three hundred and twenty. Quite a city, truly, and an exceedingly pleasant one. About sixty sites for new tents, to be erected next year, have already been selected by persons on the ground at this meeting. This is unprecedented. This is indeed a great meeting. It has been said, not inaptly, that it is of itself "*an*

institution." There is nothing like it in all New England. And still, as is seen above, it is greatly increasing from year to year. O, that it may increase in the numbers saved, and otherwise benefited, in a manner corresponding to the increase in the attendance upon its annual gatherings!

In accordance with the recommendations of the agent in his annual report, important measures have been adopted by the business meetings this year. Among the things ordered are the digging of an additional well,* the setting out of shade trees, and the erecting of a large building, two stories high, for storage of goods and for other important purposes. It is also contemplated to new seat the ground, and to erect a new stand at no very distant day—the whole to be on an improved plan.

The manner of transacting the business

* It is a most remarkable thing that one single well should supply water, as the one here did over the Sabbath, for some eight or ten thousand people, and three hundred horses. It was truly providential that no accident befell it.

of our camp meetings has been very much improved. All financial matters, and all contemplated improvements of the grounds, are referred to the Committee on Finance, now consisting of seven laymen, for them to consider and report upon; thus saving much time of the meeting, and at the same time ensuring greater accuracy and better matured plans. Near the close of this camp meeting this committee were authorized to hire a sum not exceeding one thousand dollars, to meet expenses of improvements ordered to be made the ensuing year.

The ceremony of decamping began at an early hour on the morning of Tuesday, the 24th. Nearly all then remaining left during the day. A few remained till the following morning, to enjoy the peace and quiet of this rural retreat.

CONCLUDING CHAPTER.

Having thus given brief sketches of the several camp meetings held in this rural temple of the Lord, it remains briefly to advert to some of the more prominent aggregated facts and results, and to add such remarks and reflections as may naturally suggest themselves.

And first, it will have been observed, in reading the preceding pages, that such are the natural excellences of the place, and such its adaptedness for the purposes of these annual gatherings, together with the facilities for preserving order, even where large promiscuous crowds of people congregate, that, notwithstanding it has been contemplated several times, for what have been deemed sufficient reasons, to forsake it, yet the better judgment of the brethren, and, more than that, the good providence of God, have so overruled in the matter, that

these meetings have become more and more confirmed here after each successive agitation, and are now established for many years to come, and perhaps may continue to be so till "the time of the end."

Secondly, the progressive character of the meetings can but have been noticed. This, indeed, is one of the strong *a posteriori* proofs of the original fitness of the site for the purpose for which it was at first selected. For the more it has become known, the greater have been the numbers who have come to its annual feasts. The space first cleared of its underbrush and leaves, as the area, was only a few rods of ground. It has been extended from time to time, till now it is some fifteen rods across it. The *nine* tents which at the first meckly skirted the little cleared spot, have increased from year to year, till at the present time there are between forty and fifty of large size in the main circle, — some of them equal to three or four of

the first ones put together, — besides the extensive groups of little family cottages spread around in the rear, and the large boarding establishments and others, making the whole number of tents in the grove of all descriptions about three hundred and twenty.

The whole encampment at first did not probably cover more than a half acre of ground; now it is estimated to embrace from twelve to fifteen acres. In the numbers of people attending the meetings, there has been, with perhaps one or two exceptions, a regular increase from the first year down to the present; so that, instead of the few hundreds — mostly inhabitants of the island and a few neighboring places on the main, — who composed the first meeting, the numbers present in 1857 were variously estimated at from six thousand to eight thousand; and in 1858 at about twelve thousand. “And still they come.” Besides the many who pay us visits from

other sections, this has become the meeting for about one-half of the territory embraced in the Providence Conference. The exact number of preachers present at the first meeting is not now known. There were but *nineteen* at the third. Of late years we have had from fifty to seventy; and at the last meeting, one hundred.

The number of conversions have not increased in the ratio of the increase of attendance. But there are always some new points of interest, some new developments or stirring scenes, which seem to make the meeting more marked than the one preceding. The published reports of some few of the camp meetings have not given the numbers of conversions; most of them have. Allowing a reasonable estimate for the years not thus reported, the entire number may with safety be put down at eleven hundred and fifty; an annual average of fifty. And who will presume to allege that if even but one half of

the reported conversions are real ones, the salvation of twenty-five immortal spirits is not of a thousand times more value than all the time, painstaking, and expense of one of these annual gatherings? Then there are other gracious results; the many hundreds — nay, thousands — awakened, many of whom are subsequently regenerated; and the yet other hundreds who are either reclaimed from a backslidden state, quickened, or fully consecrated.

There have been about five hundred Gospel sermons preached on this ground. Many of them have been able expositions of divine truth, and powerful appeals to the hearts and consciences of the immense throngs of people assembled.

The accommodations for boarding are now on an ample scale. There are several spacious boarding tents, at which wholesome food is well served up. Besides these there is a refreshment tent, well supplied for the accommodation of those who wish an occasional lunch.

It will doubtless have been noticed that within a few years the business affairs of the meeting have been assuming more and more of system in their management. The business meetings held several times during the encampment, as occasion may require, are now constituted of the preachers, tent masters of the large tents, and officers of the body, whether of the preceding classes or not. Of the doings of these meetings I have given in the preceding pages selected portions, such as were deemed important both as items of information, and as furnishing an index to our general camp meeting economy. To do more than this could not properly enter into the design of so limited a work. To have transcribed the items in detail, or always to have given similar ones from year to year, would not have been particularly edifying to the reader.

Having an agent for the camp meeting appointed from year to year, whose duty it

is to purchase straw, and make all needful arrangements for the convenience and comfort of the encampment, is an important feature in our system. So also is that of a finance committee, whose powers and duties have been elsewhere alluded to. Likewise that of a regular treasurer of the meeting.

As a closing remark, I may say that the camp meetings held here have uniformly been seasons of great peace and harmony. The sacramental and love-feast scenes have usually been those of thrilling interest. They have often proved to be the out-gushings of the deepest Christian love and sympathy, and of the most sincere religious fellowship.

While this meeting is becoming a great centre of attraction for the devout purposes for which it is held, no reasonable pains are spared to make the preparations and fixtures of the ground convenient and inviting. Among these are the arrangement of

the seats with backs, and the means of supplying an abundance of the best of water for the thousands who resort hither. O, that they may all drink of "the river of the water of life," to which they are so urgently invited by the men of God. And may the meetings held here continue to bless the churches and the world, till the triumphs of the Redeemer's kingdom shall become universal.

APPENDIX.

CAMP MEETING RULES.

The following Rules and Regulations for the government of the Wesleyan Grove Camp Meeting were adopted August, 1853, and amended August, 1858.

1. The ground within the circle of the tents is sacredly set apart for religious services. [This, for the time being, is our house of worship.] There shall be, therefore, no walking to and fro, or gathering together in companies for conversation of any kind, during public worship at the stand.

2. When the signal shall be given from the stand for preaching, all exercises in the tents must cease, and the people repair to the seats.

3. The hours for preaching shall be at 10 o'clock, A.M., at 2 P.M., and at 7 in the evening.

4. There shall be a superintendent appointed by each tent's company, whose duty it shall be to preserve order in his tent, in accordance with the regulations of the meeting.

5. There shall be family devotions in each tent, morning and evening, with the reading of the Scriptures.

6. The hours for meals shall be, breakfast at 7 o'clock, dinner at 12, and tea at 5½.

7. There shall be no smoking of tobacco in the tents, nor within the circle of the tents.

8. There shall be a light kept burning in each tent all night.

9. The walks for retirement are, for the ladies, in the direction in the *front of the stand*, [being a south easterly direction therefrom, and including the space between the road leading from the ground to the east or nearest landing, and that leading to the pond directly in the rear of the New Bedford Elm Street Tent,] and for the gentlemen, in the direction in the *rear of the stand*, [being a north-westerly direction therefrom, and including all the space on this side of the encampment between the two roads above named].

10. The signal will be given each morning, at 5½ o'clock, for rising, and each tent-master is required to see that this rule is enforced in all the tents, large and small, under his supervision.

11. The signal will be given at 10 o'clock in the evening, at which time all vocal exercises must cease, and all persons not having lodgings on the ground must immediately retire from the same.



[illegible]

SOUTHEASTERN MASSACHUSETTS UNIVERSITY
SPECIAL COLL F72.M5 V5
A history of the Wesleyan Grove, Martha'



3 2922 00064 334 3

Vincent, H. B. N., 1891.
A history of the Wesleyan
Grove, Martha's Vineyard

F72.M5V5

Vincent

AUTHOR

History of the Wesleyan grove,

TITLE Martha's Vineyard

DATE

